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to hate and intolerance

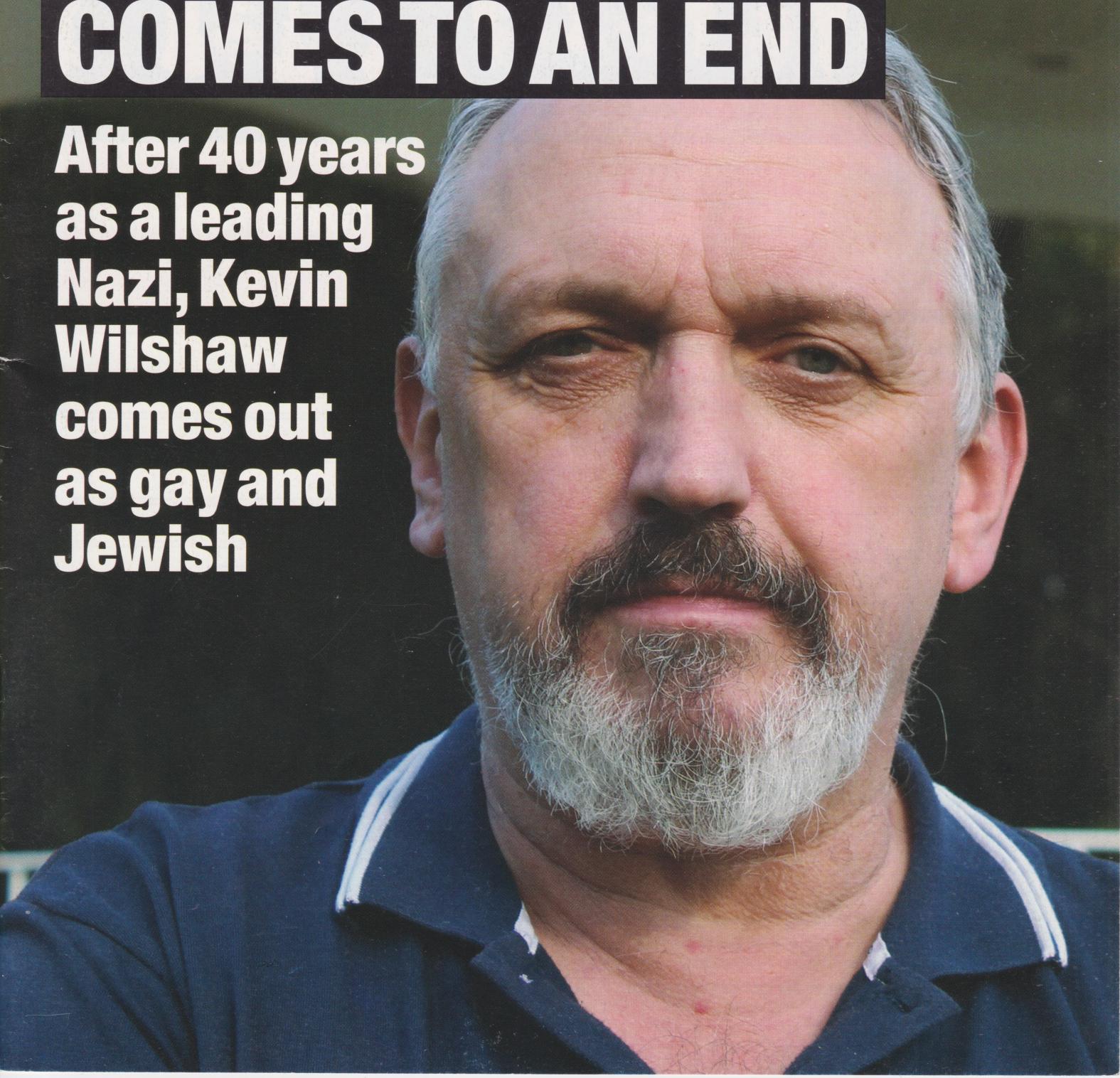
September-October 2017
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THE LONGEST SECRET COMES TO AN END

**After 40 years
as a leading
Nazi, Kevin
Wilshaw
comes out
as gay and
Jewish**



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HOPE not hate challenges organised hate and intolerance within our society. We mobilise communities by providing a positive alternative to the politics of hate.

For as little as £5 a month you can play your part in ensuring that we continue our work to bring communities together in the face of hate.

In return for a small monthly donation, you will receive:

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Editorial // page 3



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HOPE not hate is a bi-monthly publication providing information on hate groups and community initiatives to combat them.

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This is what we do

IN THIS edition of *HOPE not hate*, we tell the story of Kevin Wilshaw, a veteran nazi, who has turned his back on extremist politics to publicly come out as both gay and Jewish.

Kevin's interview on *Channel 4 News* came after six months' intervention by our Head of Research, Matthew Collins. Kevin broke with his past on national television but there are many others whom we work with who do not get the same publicity even though their route out of extremism is no less significant.

As HOPE not hate goes to press, the police have announced that six alleged members of National Action have been charged with a variety of offences, including two with a plot to kill a Labour MP. The information that led to the arrests and subsequent charging of these men originated from HOPE not hate.

While we cannot say anything more at this time, given that we will be providing evidence to the trial, the full story will come out in due course.

Some of our work is very public, other parts much less so but at the very heart of our work is our research, be it exposing plots or helping people leave extremism behind.

This is just what we do.

THE APPEAL OF POPULISM

The strong results for the right in the German, Austrian and Czech elections remind us that right-wing populism and xenophobic rhetoric remain ongoing threats.

While it is important to challenge these right-wing parties at every turn, it is also important that progressives develop an economic alternative that offers a future to people who feel left behind by globalisation and change.

WHAT IF?

What if the comments about Jews made at the Labour Party conference were made about another ethnic group? Would the reaction have been the same?

One delegate warned those supporting tougher action on antisemitism to "be careful".

Yet what if someone had suggested, at a Labour Party fringe meeting, that they should be entitled to question whether black people were genetically inferior to whites or Islam was a supremacist religion and a violent threat to the West? I suggest that most Labour Party members would be rightly horrified.

And what if a leading Labour politician repeated Ken Livingstone's words, when he said: "Some people have made offensive comments, it doesn't mean they're inherently antisemitic and hate Jews. They just go over the top when they criticise Israel"....but replaced "antisemitic" with "racist" or "Islamophobic"? Again, I would suggest there would be an outcry.

The MacPherson Inquiry set out, in very clear terms, the definition of a racist incident as "any incident which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person." This should apply as much to Jews as it does to any other minority group.

So, next time a Jewish person says that they feel unsafe at a Labour Party event, perhaps it might just be a good idea to listen to them before we shout them down and say they are simply being mischievous.

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GOLDERS GREEN: BALANCING FEAR AND RACISM



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HNH uses research, education and public engagement to challenge mistrust and racism, and helps to build communities that are inclusive, celebrate shared identities and are resilient to hate.

Initially established to counter the electoral rise of the BNP, HOPE not hate mobilises communities by providing a positive alternative to the politics of hate. HOPE not hate has over 214,000 online supporters and over 240,000 followers on Facebook. We are not aligned to any political party and will work with everyone wherever possible.

HOPE not hate comprises HOPE not hate Ltd and our charitable wing, HOPE not hate Charitable Trust.

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HOPE not hate celebration in Bradford

Paul Meszaros reports

ON 5 AUGUST, a sunny Saturday afternoon in Bradford would see "an afternoon of celebration, togetherness and Bradfordness".

Two stages with a wide variety of music including bands made up of children and disabled people played to crowds tantalised and tempted by food from across the globe.

Indeed, food came from afar and wide, from vegetarian curries to delightful Syrian food, made as a "thank you" to Bradford by Syrian refugees who live here now.

Forty stalls representing communities from across the city offered food, the Bradford HOPE not hate stall serving up Irish soda bread with lashings of butter and jam that ensured we had visitors for most of the day.

If the music and food came from across the world, the communities and groups and individuals representing them came from right across Bradford.

We were clear from the outset that our event needed to transcend those small events where a few self-selected leading citizens congratulate themselves on their "diverseness".

Instead people from all communities came together from Eccleshill and Thorpe Edge in the east to Allerton and Lower Grange in the west and to Buttershaw and beyond in the south of the city.

A particular highlight of the afternoon, and in keeping with the food theme was the participation of the wonderful Bradford Ministry of Food which made pancakes and fruit delights with scores of Bradford children.

Bradford Children's Services had a busy tent with many children taking part in activities through the afternoon and the Play Team brought massive climbing and sliding toys which were also in high demand.

As well as community-based organisations we also were pleased to welcome other campaigning groups such as Mesmac, White Ribbon and BIASAN, an advocacy charity on behalf of refugees. Incommunities, Bradford's main social housing provider, also had a busy stall as did Bradford Metropolitan Foodbank.

Key partners and supporters of the day's event were Bradford Council, Unison and Bradford TUC while further attractions were provided by West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service, which



brought a fire engine, and West Yorkshire Police which had a car and a van in the square.

Bradford is a deprived, largely de-industrialised city that is synonymous with its large Asian population and all too often it is used as a by-word for racial division and problems.

What is often less well appreciated is the extent to which Bradfordians of all backgrounds will come together to celebrate the city and its positive attributes.

The location of our event, alongside the Mirror Pool, is a case in point. Nowhere else represents a city at ease with its modern multi-cultural heritage as does the Pool where children of all backgrounds come and play together.

People in Bradford know that not everything is perfect but they are also resilient. Time and again, the politics of right-wing extremist and racist organisations have been rejected by Bradford and we at HOPE not hate are proud to have played our part in that.

We are now looking forward to another event next year but this initiative is not just about having an event once a year.

We are already planning, along with our partners in the city, a series of round table meetings to discuss issues of concern.

Acquaintanceships made on the day will hopefully bloom into friendships in the future and that can only serve to further strengthen all of Bradford's communities and the city itself.

Understanding the rise in hate crimes

OFFICIAL STATISTICS released by the Home Office show a surge of 29% in hate crimes in the past year, reporting a total of 80,393 incidents in the 12 months to March 2017.

While the figures indicate improvements in reporting mechanisms, coming within a week of the government's race audit they paint a picture of a divided country where inequalities are, at their extremes, expressed through violence.

Though an estimated 89% of attacks were motivated by race or religion and rates of police-recorded hate crime spiked immediately after the EU referendum and the Westminster terrorist attacks, our research indicates these events only have impact on the views and behaviour of a certain section of society.

Our *Fear & HOPE* report, released earlier this year, found an increasingly polarised country as those at both ends of the identity spectrum hardened their views.

While the liberal proportion of society has increased leaving a shrinking middle ground – which would seem positive news – the hostile ends of the spectrum have remained constant since 2011.

Brexit and the recent terror attacks have mobilised these hostile groups whose views have hardened. Islamophobia has increased and among the most hostile identity "tribe", seven out of 10 agreed that Islam was "a dangerous religion that incites violence".

There has been a small increase in the proportion of those who would support violence since 2011, concentrated in the most hostile groups. Around 20% of the English population would support a violent campaign to stop the building of a mosque. This despite the decline of nationalist street movements over this period.

Our findings indicate that society is divided on where sympathies would lie after a terrorist attack.

While the majority support coming together in unity, around 40% would support a demonstration calling for stronger action against extremism and terrorism. Shared fears can bring us together but there is more to be done to change the response of those still willing to turn to violence or take to the streets.

The HOPE not hate survey also indicates that these hostile groups are likely to be more motivated towards aggressive responses. Brexit looks likely to cause an economic downturn, causing greater insecurity and rousing increased fear and hostility towards others.

Brexit may also trigger further right-wing discontent. Those who felt that Brexit would answer their anxieties about immigration and multiculturalism have become more apprehensive with the realisation that it is unlikely to bring about any immediate changes. Leave voters have also indicated a high degree of anger in response to compromises on a Brexit deal.

The latest figures are worrying and represent just the tip of an iceberg given that a high proportion of hate crimes goes unrecorded. There is a great deal of work to be done to challenge violent hatred in our society and we need to act fast.

New hire

HOPE not hate is delighted to announce that Matthew McGregor, a veteran digital political strategist, will join us in the New Year.

Matthew is one of the most talented and astute political analysts around and brings many years of political and campaigning experience from both sides of the Atlantic to our organisation.

He played a key role in the 2012 Presidential elections as head of Barack Obama's digital attack operation, tasked with targeting Mitt Romney's credibility.

He has worked for the Labour Party, the digital agency Blue State Digital and is currently employed as head of digital at the New York-based political consultancy Precision Strategies.

Matthew's expertise will add great value to our campaigning and political work, our ability to respond quickly and decisively to unfolding events and will help inform and shape our intervention in the US where we have recently set up a HOPE not hate organisation.

You're charged!

BRITISH FAR RIGHT activists are now awaiting trial for a variety of offences including assault, incitement to racial hatred and membership of a proscribed terrorist organisation.

Holocaust denier Alison Chabloz, who produced a video calling Auschwitz a "theme park", is to stand trial in January for posting an antisemitic song online.

Also facing charges for antisemitism is Jeremy Bedford-Turner, a former Army intelligence officer and a leader of the London Forum, following a speech given at a far right protest in London in 2015. The CPS initially decided not to prosecute but, after reviewing the case, decided to go ahead with the case.

Britain First leader Paul Golding and his deputy Jayda Fransen have been charged with causing religiously aggravated harassment. "The investigation related to the distribution of leaflets in the Thanet and Canterbury areas, and the posting of online videos during a trial held at Canterbury crown court the same month," police told reporters.

Two serving soldiers were among three men charged with membership of National Action, a nazi group proscribed by the British Government for being a terrorist organisation late last year.

Mikko Vehvilainen, based at Sennybridge Camp, Brecon in Powys, is also charged with possessing a document containing information likely to be useful for terrorism and publishing material that is threatening, abusive or insulting by posting comments on a website intending to stir up racial hatred.

Mark Barrett, 24 and based at the Dhekelia Garrison in Cyprus, faces a single charge of National Action membership contrary to the 2000 Terrorism Act.

Keep up to date

HOPE not hate is launching two new regular e-newsletters so our supporters can be kept informed of the latest developments in areas of interest to them.

The Insider will be a weekly round-up of news, gossip and analysis from inside Britain's far right. *Alt-Right News* will be a weekly summary of developments in the international Alternative Right, comprising of the white supremacist Alt-Right and the cultural warriors of the Alt-Light.

The e-bulletins will allow our supporters to get a greater level of information about the subjects they are interested in a more regular and up-to-date fashion.

To subscribe to either, or both, of these new e-bulletins, simply go to www.hopenothate.org.uk and follow the links.

BELGIUM | Trying to erase a dark past

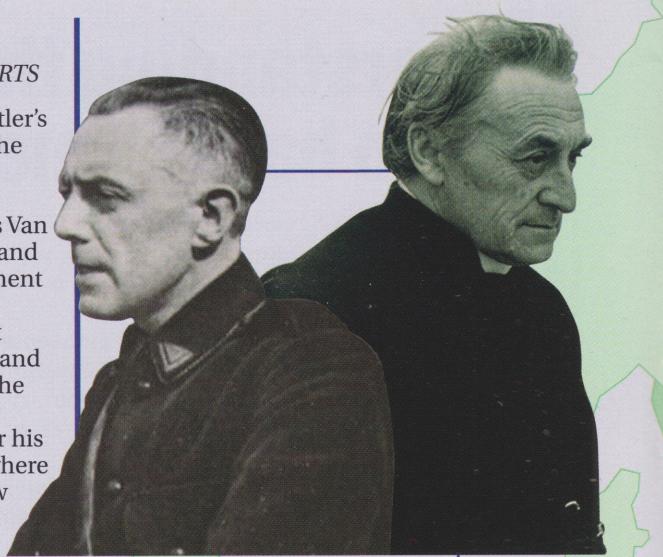
WIM HAELESTERMAN FOR AFF-VERZET/RÉSISTANCES IN BRUSSELS REPORTS

THE FAR RIGHT demonstrations in Charlottesville USA that caused the death of protester Heather Heyer did not pass unnoticed in Belgium, triggering lively debate on removing statues that are seen by many as symbols of racism, colonialism and fascism. Renaming streets and squares named after controversial personalities is on the agenda as well.

The many statues that honour King Leopold II for his "civilising work" in Congo – a state that was his personal property until it became a Belgian colony in 1908, a situation that lasted until 1960 – and streets named after extremists that sympathised with or

openly collaborated with Adolf Hitler's Nazi regime are also the focus of the debate.

Some Flemish towns still have streets that carry the name of Joris Van Severen (1894-1940), the founder and head of the fascist Flemish movement "Verdinaso," or the likes of Cyriel Verschaeve. The latter was a priest and writer who was part of the SS and encouraged Flemish men to join the Nazi armies on the Eastern front. He was given the death penalty for his activities but escaped to Austria where he died in 1949. Hopefully the new public debate will lead to the eradication of this scandal.



SPAIN | German Hammerskin nazis in Mallorca violence

SANDRA CORTÉS REPORTS FOR ANTIFEIXISTES.ORG

IN JUNE, a gang of twenty German nazi thugs sparked violent incidents at the popular Bierkönig bar in Palma de Mallorca during a concert by the German singer Mia Julia.

The concert had to be stopped, the audience booing and chanting an anti-fascist song to drown out the yelling and bawling nazis and force them out of the pub.

This incident was noted widely in the Spanish media which unveiled the background of this mob of nazis, identifying them as belonging to the so-called Hammerskin Nation and coming from Frankfurt, Dortmund and Hamburg.

They have, apparently, been regular visitors to the holiday island and have acquired a bad reputation for their violent behaviour.

The Spanish section of the Hammerskins – closely linked to the nazi "Ultras Sur" hooligans of Real Madrid football club – was outlawed in 2009 but the German section is not illegal in Spain where its members display openly Nazi banners and have dubbed Mallorca "German Protectorate of Mallorca".

And, ironically, they vent outrage at foreigners on an island where they themselves are the foreigners.



GREECE | Violent outbursts by nazi splinter groups

FROM PANAYOTE DIMITRAS FOR GREEK HELSINKI MONITOR IN ATHENS

ON 10 JUNE, a stray bullet killed an 11-year-old boy during school celebrations in Menidi, an Athens suburb. Police arrested a 23-year-old Romani man who, on 12 June, was handed a suspended 40-month sentence for the use of a weapon. The local Roma community was subsequently collectively blamed for the death of the boy and, for several days, angry mobs protested with racist slogans and threw Molotov cocktails at the two homes of the 23-year-old suspect's Romani family, burning them extensively. Two nazi groups, the Independent Maeander Nationalists and Combat 18, published videos showing the racist marches and the arson attacks. No arrests have ever been made, however, and the authorities have failed to respond to a letter of concern from Greek and international NGOs.

Also on 10 June, the organisers of Athens Pride, whose main march was scheduled for that evening, were attacked with a volunteer being

injured. The nazi group Apella, that claimed responsibility for the attack, had published homophobic material and racist and threatening messages on Facebook. In its Athens office, it operates an Internet radio station where it hosts known extreme right-wing journalists. Yet, for that and for all preceding actions, no arrests are ever made.

Greek Helsinki Monitor's criminal complaints, filed after these and other related activities of these nazi groups that are thought to be overlapping and that pledge allegiance to a former nazi Golden Dawn deputy leader, are lying "forgotten" in the prosecutor's office.



CROATIA | Croatian right's annual historical

FROM MARTIN BARIĆ IN ZAGREB

IN AUGUST 2017 – like any August in the recent years – the Croatian extreme right has capitalised on the commemoration of the so-called Victory and Homeland Thanksgiving Day and the Day of Croatian Defenders celebrating the 1995 military operation *Storm* in Croatia, which conquered a substantial portion of Croatia's national territory but also resulted in the displacement of large numbers of Serb civilians. To this day, the plight of the displaced persons remains taboo and the only sanctioned discussion of the operation involves nationalist triumphalism and a fervent denial of the well-documented war crimes perpetrated by the Croatian side.

Malignant historical revisionism is not

SWEDEN | Fascists raid refugee protest

FROM ANDERS DALSBRO, FOR EXPO IN STOCKHOLM

A SIT-DOWN in central Stockholm by asylum seekers protesting against their impending deportation to Afghanistan was raided on 8 August. At least 15 activists from the fascist Nordic Youth were behind the attack. The Afghan protestors, mostly minors and young adults, were attacked with a lit flare. Three people suffered minor injuries, two from burns.

No one was arrested but the police say that they have identified the fascists and will continue to investigate the incident. Nordic Youth mounted a similar assault on a pro-asylum demonstration in the same square three months ago, throwing incendiary flares at the crowd.

At the time of the 8 August attack, the young refugees had been in the square for two days as part of their fight to avoid deportation to

Afghanistan, where they would be in grave danger. They also want to meet the head of the Swedish Migration Agency, Mikael Ribbenvik.

The violence took place just days after the same Nordic Youth thugs tried to disrupt the Stockholm Pride parade. Nordic Youth, who are eager to stress that they are not national socialist but push for a pan-Scandinavian nationalism with an emphasis on ultra-conservative family values, has been active since 2010. A small organisation, its combination of intimidatory stunts and media-savvy political action has won it attention beyond its meagre numbers. In recent years, it has attended international events with racists in Poland, Ukraine and Estonia and maintains contacts with far right Poles in Sweden.

POLAND | Tory allies support shooting at rescue boats

FROM RAFAL PANKOWSKI FOR NEVER AGAIN IN WARSAW

RYSZARD CZARNECKI, a deputy president of the European Parliament from the Tory-led European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) group has endorsed shooting at NGO refugee boats in the Mediterranean.

On 18 August, Czarnecki expressed his enthusiasm by exclaiming "At long last!" on social media, retweeting news of a Libyan border guard crew firing shots at a Spanish NGO rescue boat. Czarnecki's support for shooting at the boats came hours after the terrorist attack in Barcelona that left more than a dozen people dead. The attack resulted in a new wave of Islamophobic and anti-refugee statements made by numerous Polish politicians and state-owned media outlets.

Czarnecki is no stranger to anti-migrant and anti-Muslim outbursts. In 2011, he wrote an article "Immigration

is threatening us" in which he stated: "I am afraid of Muslims" and expressed satisfaction that there are so few in Poland. The Muslim community in Poland amounts to less than 0.1% of the population. Born in London in 1963, he is a member of the ruling right-wing party, Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, PiS). He was previously an MEP for the nationalist and populist Self-Defence (Samoobrona) party. The British Conservatives and the PiS have been officially allied since the ECR's creation in 2009.

Another high-profile MEP from the ECR, former speaker of the Polish Parliament, Marek Jurek, linked the presence of Muslims in European countries to terrorism in an interview on 9 June by making a chilling reference to Enoch Powell's infamous racist 1968 "Rivers of Blood" speech.

HUNGARY | Fascists raid refugee protest

FROM ISTVÁN TÓTH IN BUDAPEST

IN JUNE, at Vecsés near Budapest, a new extreme right-wing movement called Force and Determination was launched. Its core is the nazi Betyársereg (Army of Outlaws), a close ally of Identitesz and the far right Jobbik party. Originally, the recently registered Party of Order and Justice, led by the infamous racist mayor of Érpatak, Mihály Zoltán Orosz, was to have been a co-founder of the Force and Determination but, at the last moment, he changed his mind.

One of the most important organisers and patrons of Force and Determination is Rudolf Nagy, an American-Hungarian with dual-nationality working in the hospitality

industry, whose wife is a black Latin-American woman. This fact is ironic, in the light of the movement's naked racist intolerance. Nagy is the closest friend of Zsolt Tyritýán, leader of Betyársereg, the backbone of the new movement.

Before Force and Determination was established, a few Jobbik leaders took part in preliminary negotiations with it... strange as press rumour had it that the new fascist outfit was set up as a rival to Jobbik which has, supposedly, turned "left". The idea, apparently, is to win over radical far right voters who will not vote for the ruling Fidesz and to get huge state funding to contest next year's elections as a registered party.

forgery

reserved only for recent events. As in previous years, the ultra-nationalist singer Marko Perković Thompson staged a concert on the day although, this year, it took place in a different city from the official celebration. As usual, the concertgoers – most of them young people – displayed copious collaborationist and Nazi insignia and the salute used by wartime Nazi collaborators was ubiquitous.

The concert is only part of the attempts to reinterpret and rehabilitate the symbolism of the Independent State of Croatia, the WWII Nazi puppet state infamous for its extermination camps and the regime's cruelty. Perković himself was handed misdemeanour charges for publicly using the Nazi salute.



CANADA | Far right on the run

FROM MARTIN THÉRIAULT IN OTTAWA

FAR RIGHT groups have been continually outnumbered while trying to demonstrate against refugees in Canada recently.

On 19 August, 8,000 people countered a demonstration by the far right in Vancouver and, the next day, 1,000 people encircled 300 members of the fascist La Meute group for more than four hours in Quebec City. The far right had to march with heavy police protection after emerging from an underground parking centre.

On 30 September, the Storm Alliance, formerly the Soldiers of Odin, were put on the backfoot in several parts of Canada. In Quebec, they were able to gather 200 far rightists against refugees – at the US border crossing – but were met by members of refugee support groups, anti-fascists and concerned local citizens.

In Ottawa, 50 or so members of the Northern Guard and Proudboys had to leave under heavy police protection from more than 250 anti-racists on Parliament Hill. In the rest of Canada, in four other demonstrations, racist extremists were outnumbered 10 to 1 by local coalitions.

In Toronto, 2,000 members of a large coalition of progressive groups, students and trades unions marched proactively against white supremacy and Islamophobia.

SERBIA | State-fascists collude against opposition

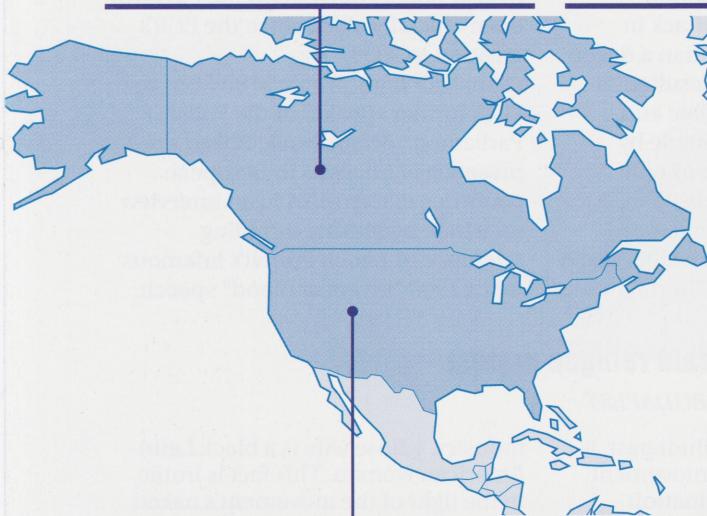
FROM DAŠKO MILINOVĆ IN NOVY SAD

RECENT ATTEMPTS to set up film screenings and debates on the 1998–1999 Kosovo war and crimes committed at the time have resulted in an outburst of far right violence across Serbia. Nationalist and nazi groups have disrupted each and every one of these events and the behaviour of the police and prosecutors shows undeniable links between the ruling party and known fascist thugs.

The governing Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) uses notorious convicted hooligans and fascist “heavies” to guard its events and physically remove opposition but now the same people are invading and destroying events organised

by NGOs and other groups working on lasting peace and reconciliation.

While officially the SNS and state president Aleksandar Vučić are calling for a “new approach” to Kosovo, rank and file SNS members are organising and conducting terror against the Serbian regime’s opponents. Defamation and public smear campaigns appear not to be enough so old gangsters from the SNS’s previous political life, when it was the biggest far right party, the Serbian Radical Party, and new fascist hooligans are being recruited and unleashed to intimidate those who disagree with them



USA | Thousands rally in solidarity with victims of Virginia terror

FROM THE CENTRE FOR NEW COMMUNITY IN CHICAGO

HUNDREDS OF solidarity rallies were staged across the US following the murderous act of far right terrorism in Charlottesville, Virginia on 12 August. Nearly two dozen people were injured when a car driven by a far right activist and Hitler fan ploughed into a crowd of people protesting at a white supremacist “Unite the Right” rally in the town. Heather Heyer, 32, was tragically killed in the attack.

In the days following the attack,

hundreds of thousands of dollars were raised to support victims and their families. Thousands also took to streets to show their solidarity and to continue standing up for the values exemplified by Heyer.

Media outlets reported that over 650 events were organised nationwide to honour Heyer and all those who courageously opposed white supremacy directly in Charlottesville. Participants were heartened by the many shows



Tribute to Heather Heyer
Photo Charlie Moehle



of support from Europe and across the globe – a stunning display of international solidarity. Meanwhile, right-wing leaders in the U.S. continue to ignore or only tepidly denounce the actions and destructive rhetoric of the Trump administration that has undeniably emboldened the extremists who gathered in Charlottesville. Their silence speaks volumes.

Guest column...

Does the Alternative Right believe in Free Speech?

By Joe Mulhall

LAST MONTH, in People's Park in Berkeley, California, something strange happened. A tiny demonstration of activists from the far right Alt Right movement (who believe that 'white identity' is under threat) decided to hold a small rally.

On the slightly raised wooden stage were members of the far right men's fraternity, the Proud Boys, replete with Fred Perry polo shirts and armoured vests, as well as prominent figures from within the "alt-light" wing of the Alternative Right (who focus more on perceived threats to the West than to white identity). Joining them were others like Kyle Chapman (nicknamed "Based Stickman") who has a history of violence.

A group of anti-fascist protestors made their way over and mounted the stage. Chants of "No Trump, No KKK, No Fascist USA!" drowned out the speaker. Running scuffles between the two sets of protestors had been breaking out for several days and this looked like it would be the start of another.

Boos rang out as a member of the anti-fascist group Refuse Fascism began to shout over the crowd: "They say 'America first', we say 'humanity first'!"

To everyone's surprise, an Alternative Right protestor stepped forward and called for quiet: "Let him speak, we believe in Free Speech". This man, wearing a "Patriot Prayer" T-shirt, was inviting an anti-fascist protestor to speak at their demonstration.

Was this a shining example of how the far right has genuinely adopted the cause of free speech

and open dialogue? Was this the realisation of Milo Yiannopoulos' supposed dream to return free speech to the home of the 1960s Free Speech Movement?

The short answer is 'no'. Rather it is a perfect example of how 'free speech' is cleverly and successfully being used by the Alternative Right to undermine political opponents.

DISINGENUOUS AND HYPOCRITICAL

The briefest of investigations exposes a gaping chasm between the rhetoric and reality of Alternative Right activists on the issue of free speech.

Perhaps the starker examples of the hypocrisy on display by those determined to "protect free speech" at Berkeley are the three attacks on a left-wing book shop, Revolution Books, that happened over the course of the two days of protests.

Videos show 40 right-wing protestors from the Free Speech Rally banging on the windows while the *Daily Californian* reports they were yelling rape threats against store employees and customers.

DOES THE ALTERNATIVE RIGHT UNDERSTAND FREE SPEECH?

Crucial here is their confusion of the right to say whatever they want (a right they have) with their belief that they should be able to say it wherever they want.

For example, it is true that Yiannopoulos has a right to say whatever he pleases, but that is *not* the same as having a right to say it on the campus at UC Berkeley.

Likewise, he certainly has a

right to write this book but no-one has an obligation to publish it.

Similarly, their use of the notion of a 'marketplace of ideas' has no relationship to the quality or value of the speech they demand should be heard, when and where they demand.

This is important when it comes to the question of whether universities – which are meant to advance debate – have an obligation to spend often exorbitant security fees to host the likes of Yiannopoulos.

Alternative Right activists also wrongly assume that diversity of opinion always leads to attainment of the truth and that the correct argument will always win if debated. This optimism ignores the possibility that ill-informed opinions will flood the debate and that "he who shouts the loudest" will end up drowning out others.

A TOOL TO BE USED

The Alt-Right worldview is inherently and openly exclusionary and anti-democratic. When Richard Spencer and his alt-right supporters held their "Free Speech Rally" on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC back in June, Nathan Damigo of Identity Europa made clear the position when he said: "I want to say one thing. Fuck your freedom, give me responsibility" and explicitly called free speech a "tool" to be used.

However, while few are taken in by those on the extreme end of the movement, many more give undue time to the claims of those on the more "moderate" end of this spectrum.

Take the hypocrisy of Yiannopoulos, who organised

the Free Speech Week at UC Berkeley, yet also called for the banning of Glasgow University's Muslim Students Association earlier this year. It seems that for Yiannopoulos free speech should be universal except for Muslims.

Similarly, the notorious anti-Muslim "counter-jihadist" Pamela Geller, who also attended the tiny Free Speech Rally in Berkeley, was the organiser of a protest demanding that the Muslim political activist Linda Sarsour be disinvited from speaking at the City University of New York last May.

TAKE A KNEE

Many of those at Free Speech Week events recently have worn "Make America Great Again" hats and Trump T-shirts. Yet this is a President who has suggested "open(ing) up the libel laws" which many have seen as a threat to the First Amendment and, last November, he suggested imprisoning and stripping of their citizenship those who burned the American flag.

And, again, Trump called for National Football League players protesting against racist policing by refusing to stand during the national anthem to be sacked.

Across the American right, the principle of free speech is being used, not defended. The far right is seeking to use the right to free speech to shut down the rights of those it disagrees with.

The far right has confused, deliberately or otherwise, "its speech" with "free speech" and, rather than defending dissent, it seeks to crush it, rather than expanding debate, it aims to shut it down.

UKIP: New Leader,

UKIP has chosen former police officer Henry Bolton as its fourth leader within a year. The shock result has already prompted the formation of splinter groups outside the party reports David Lawrence

The recent UKIP leadership race, which came to a head on 29 September, was the most bitterly fought in the party's tempestuous history, dominated by rows over the candidacy of leading British anti-Islam activist Anne Marie Waters. Bookmakers' favourite Waters came a close second with 21.3% of the vote to Bolton's 29.9%.

Bolton's victory surprised many – the former Kent police and crime commissioner candidate, who joined UKIP from the Liberal Democrats three years ago, lacks profile even within the party.

However, throughout the campaign, he was able to present himself as a strong, respectable and dully uncontroversial moderate, an image greatly aided by his military background and his 2013 OBE gong for services to international security.

The tactic proved effective for a section of the UKIP membership which remains deeply divided over the anti-Islam direction in which former leader Paul Nuttall led the party.

Bolton spoke directly to fears about far right candidate Waters, warning grimly that UKIP could become a "UK Nazi party" if it elected the wrong candidate.

While new leader Bolton has made gestures towards UKIP's right wing – for example, stating that Islam leaves Britons feeling "buried" and that multiculturalism is "swamping" British identity – he has readjusted the central focus of the party away from Islam and back to securing a hard Brexit.

He has already reined back some of

UKIP's more hard-line policies, refusing to call for a cap on the number of people coming to the UK and scrapping Nuttall's *burka* ban.

While his hopes of modernising the party and winning back support will, in part, be at the mercy of the Brexit negotiations, Bolton still faces an uphill battle.

He has an obvious lack of charisma and, despite winning, is hardly popular, securing less than a third of the 46% that turned out to vote. The stakes are extremely high – in the words of North East UKIP MEP Jonathan Arnott: "either he succeeds or the party dies" – and UKIP is already splintering.

FOR BRITAIN

Waters has already launched her own anti-Islam outfit "For Britain" with her campaign aide Jack Buckby, formerly of the British National Party (BNP) and best known for standing for the extreme anti-Islam party Liberty GB in the Batley and Spen by-election following the fascist murder of Jo Cox MP in 2016.

Waters has extensive links in the anti-Muslim "counter-jihad" scene, working with English Defence League (EDL) founder Stephen Lennon in the anti-Muslim movement Pegida UK, and spearheading the failed 2015 "Muhammad cartoons" exhibition.

She runs the counter-jihad internet resource Sharia Watch UK and appeared on the Swedish "alt-right"

white nationalist media platform Red Ice TV in April and was listed for the October 2017 conference of the far right discussion group, the Traditional Britain Group (TBG).

Waters has harnessed the support of UKIP's Islamophobes by portraying herself as a martyr following her deselection by UKIP's National Executive Committee (NEC) from standing as a parliamentary candidate in the 2017 snap election.



New Splinters

(left to right) Henry Bolton, UKIP's fourth leader within a year. Anne Marie Waters and John Rees-Evans

Waters announced her candidacy for UKIP leadership at a disorderly anti-Muslim demonstration, organised by Lennon in Manchester in June, and the large majority of the party's MEPs threatened to leave the party if she won. The day after her loss to Bolton, former UKIP leader Nigel Farage penned a Telegraph article entitled

"Racists nearly killed UKIP this week", stating that he would have abandoned the party had Waters won.

Farage's statements and Bolton's moderate platform have already prompted prominent supporters of Waters to walk out, including former NEC member Anish Patel. Lennon has also lashed out at Farage's comments and tweeted to Waters: "please start a new party & let's politicise a generation. The working class have been abandoned by labour & now by ukip [sic]".

The chances of For Britain developing into a legitimate electoral threat are slim. The extremism of Waters, her history of engagement with far right projects and

her association with notorious right-wing extremist figures means her ability to attract any mainstream support is severely curtailed.

Additionally, as Farage's blasting of Waters in the press has undercut some of her potential support within UKIP, For Britain seems destined to serve as little more than a vessel for the most extreme and disgruntled UKIP exiles and ex-BNP members.

The party will, however, do its best to exploit tragedies and terror attacks to spread its divisive anti-immigrant rhetoric online.

Both Waters and especially Lennon have large social media followings,





Arron Banks and Nigel Farage with President Donald Trump. Photo: Twitter/Leave EU

and Lennon and Buckby are currently employed by Rebel Media, a Canadian far right media outlet that has proved an effective loudspeaker for the far right.

Moreover, both Waters and Lennon have backgrounds in anti-Muslim street movements and, while Waters has previously spoken of her desire to use electoral means rather than street protests, exploiting highly-charged issues and events with action on the streets is an option that remains open to the party.

AFFINITY UK

Another emerging splinter group is the oddball Affinity UK which currently appears to consist of little more than the website reboot2020.com.

Leadership contestant John Rees-Evans, who tied for third place with David Kurten with 15.6%, has left UKIP to become Affinity's "Spokesman for Liberty".

Rees-Evans is a bizarre figure, until recently mainly known for his extraordinary claim that a "homosexual donkey" tried to rape his horse and for a profile in VICE magazine in which the defence-obsessed ex-soldier gave details of the heavily-fortified underground bunker he had built in Hungary.

Rees-Evans ran on a platform that combined plans to revolutionise the party with direct democracy together with hard-line messaging on immigration, for example, suggesting Britons with dual-citizenship should be paid £9,000 to leave the UK.

His campaign gained the support of sections of UKIP's troublesome

Young Independence (YI) youth group, including YI leader Jamie Ross McKenzie who is understood also to be considering leaving UKIP.

Affinity's primary aim is to replace representative democracy in parliament with direct democracy. Alongside plausible-sounding policies – such as restructuring the NHS, aiming for a hard Brexit and "immigration for unfulfilled vacancies by invitation only" – the group's website offers a slew of seemingly ludicrous claims, such as setting up a "Parallel Parliament" in 2018 and replacing the Cabinet with a Board of Trustees.

"By March 2019 we anticipate the majority of MPs to have agreed to cross the floor to join us", the website states, aiming to force a vote of No Confidence in the government on 26 March 2020.

Affinity's website also offers this wonderful statement: "the group behind the party, who cannot be disclosed yet, along with Rees-Evans, are aiming high with ambitions to employ 41,000 staff, have 650 constituency offices and produce their own TV and radio content."

Needless to say, such phantasies are unlikely to connect with an electorate still connected to reality.

FARAGE AND BANKS

Shortly after the EU Referendum, UKIP's former largest donor, the multimillionaire Arron Banks, started talking about the launch of a new political venture targeting younger voters and combining the direct democracy of

the Italian Five Star Movement with the anti-immigrant scaremongering of his Leave.EU campaign.

Before the June snap general election, Banks and his sidekick, Leave.EU's communications director, Andy Wigmore, were waging a calculated campaign to undermine UKIP to capitalise on its exiting membership at the May local elections.

The duo had Farage lined up for a leadership role but, as UKIP's dire general election results rolled in, Farage claimed he would have "no choice" but to return to frontline politics if he felt Brexit was "threatened".

However, he ruled himself out of the UKIP leadership election and, instead, publicly put his support behind Bolton while repeatedly maligning Waters in the press.

This may have been a calculated move. Bolton was a candidate considered unlikely to win and, by portraying Waters (who became the frontrunner) as a racist, Farage could present himself as more moderate in comparison despite moving in an increasingly anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant direction himself.

Bolton's victory has, at least temporarily, derailed any plans for a new party. Following Bolton's shock victory, Arron Banks tweeted: "This is great news & I'm sure both myself and Nigel will want to re-engage with the party!" Farage has since written of his "new hope" for UKIP in *The Telegraph*.

Farage and Banks' "re-engagement" with UKIP will be strained, though, and seems unlikely to last.

Bolton lacks the oomph to inspire the younger activists Banks hopes to reach and the party remains chaotic at branch level.

Moreover, Bolton has signalled that he wants to move UKIP away from the ugly xenophobia promoted by the likes of Banks. Banks and Farage might attempt to manipulate Bolton as the resignation of UKIP's former MP Douglas Carswell in March has removed major blocks for pushing through hard right policies.

However, a reengagement with xenophobia would almost inevitably reignite infighting and, unlike Farage, Bolton does not have the strength of personality to hold the party together.

While little is certain at this point, Bolton faces an uphill battle to keep the party together amidst the acrimony and the splinters.

It is notable that within hours of Bolton's victory, Banks was back to his divisive ways, swiping at his old enemy Neil Hamilton, leader of UKIP in the Welsh Assembly. If Farage and Banks do split from the party, it may spell the end of the UK Independence Party.

For Britain, Against Islam

Anne Marie Waters has announced the launch of a new far right party writes **David Lawrence**

FOLLOWING her failed UKIP leadership bid, anti-Muslim activist Anne Marie Waters has announced the launch of a new far right party.

Waters is to be joined by Jack Buckby, formerly of the British National Party (BNP) and best known for standing for the extreme anti-Islam party Liberty GB in the Batley and Spen by-election following the murder of Jo Cox MP in 2016.

For Britain will stand on an explicitly anti-Muslim platform and, while it may be consigned to the far right fringe electorally, will seek to stir up hatred and exacerbate divisions in the UK.

More details of the fledgling party are yet to emerge but this is what we know so far.

BACKGROUND

For Britain is Waters' attempt to harness the energy of her controversial UKIP leadership campaign in which she came second with 21.3% of the vote. Waters' perceived persecution by new UKIP leader Henry Bolton – and former UKIP leader Nigel Farage – has made her a martyr in the eyes of the Islamophobic elements within UKIP.

Bolton's moderate platform and lack of charisma, alongside Farage's Telegraph article titled "Racists nearly killed UKIP this week", have already prompted prominent supporters of Waters to walk away from UKIP, including former National Executive Committee (NEC) member Anish Patel.

Both Waters and Buckby have extensive links in the anti-Islam "counter-jihad" scene and have already gained the support of former English Defence League (EDL) leader Steven Yaxley-Lennon (*aka* tommy Robinson).

PLATFORM

Waters' UKIP leadership manifesto, on which Buckby was a strong influence, unsurprisingly suggests that For Britain will push punitive policies and alarmist language about Islam which, according to Waters, "is having, and will continue to have, a profound and negative impact on freedom of speech, law enforcement, and especially the rights and freedoms of women".

In order to combat Islam, Waters called for a ban on the burka, describing it as a "a security threat, a symbol of jihadism and a commitment to sharia". She also advocates "the internment of known jihadis and the deportation of non-British citizens engaged in any Islam-related criminal act", and would "bring to an end any covert relationships between police commanders and 'community leaders'".

Waters would also "commit to a large reduction in immigration, including a temporary freeze, so that illegal migrants already in Britain can be investigated and deported in appropriate".

Some of Waters' policies echo the 2010-era BNP. For example, her desire to repeal the Human Rights

Act in order to "clearly and unapologetically place the rights of British citizens above those of non-British citizens" and to "end the segregationist and race-based policing that emerged following the MacPherson Inquiry into the murder of Stephen Lawrence."

She also seeks a hard Brexit, and to "build alliances with like-minded partners throughout Europe".

PROSPECTS

The extreme nature of Waters' beliefs, her history of engagement with far right political projects and her links with notable far right figures mean that her ability to attract any mainstream support is severely limited.

As such, the chances of For Britain developing into a legitimate electoral threat are slim with the party destined to serve as little more than a magnet for the most extreme and disgruntled UKIP exiles and ex-BNP members.

An important barrier to Waters' courting of UKIP has been Nigel Farage who has maligned Waters in the press. By doing so, Farage has been able to present himself as moderate in comparison, despite moving in an increasingly anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim direction himself.

Farage remains hugely popular among the UKIP support base and his disavowal of Waters will have undercut some of her potential support. Additionally the aggressive, often extreme, rhetoric of



Waters – and especially Buckby – is unlikely to be palatable to the electorate.

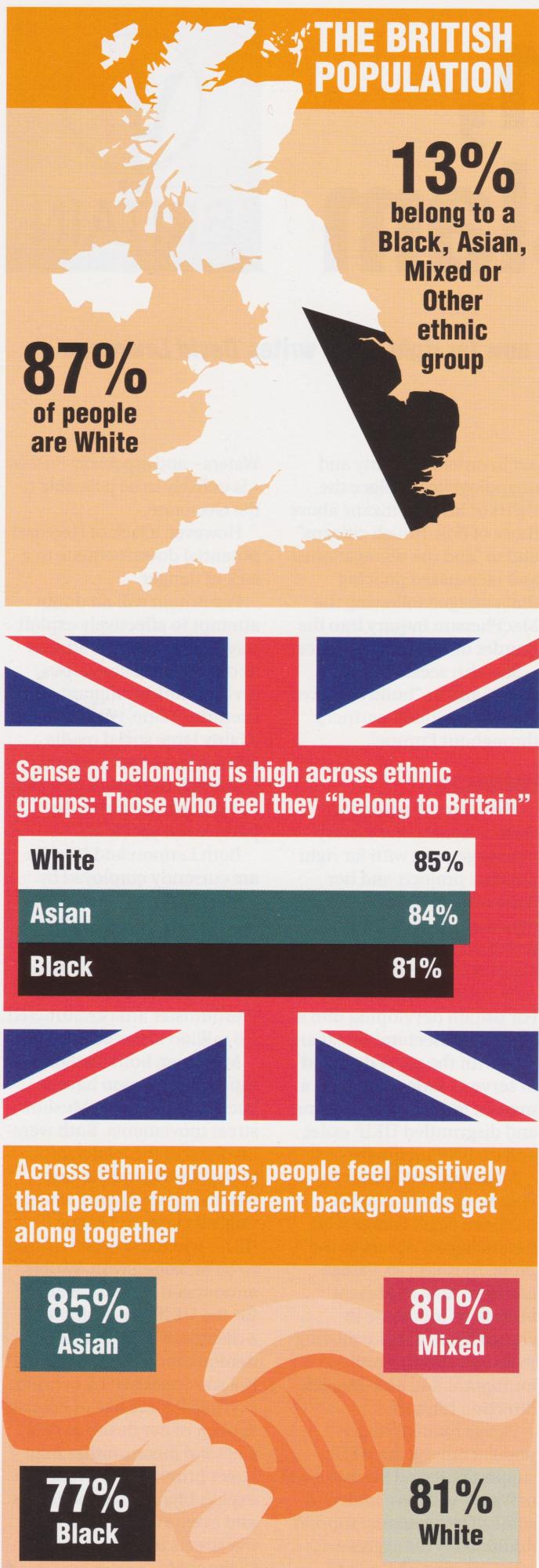
However, a lack of electoral potential doesn't equate to a lack of danger.

For Britain will no doubt attempt to effectively exploit tragedies and terror attacks to disseminate dangerous, divisive anti-immigrant rhetoric online. Waters has a fairly large social media following, as does Lennon (although the extent to which he will be involved in the party is not yet clear).

Both Lennon and Buckby are currently employed by Rebel Media, a Canadian far right media outlet that has proved an effective extremist loudspeaker. Lennon's tirade for Rebel in the wake of the Westminster attacks attracted 1.6 million views on YouTube.

Moreover, both Waters and, especially, Lennon have a background in anti-Muslim street movements. Both were involved in the leadership of Pegida UK and Lennon was the central figure in the English Defence League (EDL) while it was still a force to be reckoned with. Waters announced her candidacy for the UKIP leadership at a disorderly anti-Muslim demonstration in Manchester in June organised by Lennon.

While Waters has previously spoken of her desire to seek electoral means rather than street protests, the avenue to exploit highly-charged issues and events with action on the streets remains open to the party.



Uncomfortable but long over

Rosie Carter reports on the Government's newly released race audit

THE GOVERNMENT'S race disparity audit released in October reveals a bleak picture of how people of different backgrounds are treated in British society.

Black and ethnic minority (BAME) people face widespread discrimination in health, education, employment and the criminal justice system.

BAME Britons are almost twice as likely to be unemployed than their white counterparts with a wider gap in the north than in the south of the country.

BAME people are also far less likely to be in managerial positions than white people and are far less likely to be homeowners.

Furthermore, over half (54%) of black British pupils and just 13% of white gypsy and traveller children are reaching the expected standards for reading, writing and maths at primary school.

These findings on inequality are stark and, while critics have already suggested that none of this information is new, collecting and presenting this data in this way fills a much-needed gap.

It is true that these outcomes are things we have heard before. Earlier in 2017, *The Guardian's Colour of Power* project indicated that just three percent of Britain's most powerful political, financial, judicial,

and cultural and security positions were held by those from BAME groups.

Last month, the Lammy Review found "overt discrimination" in the British criminal justice system, with black people disproportionately incarcerated at a rate worse than in the U.S.A.

Laying this information bare, with the challenge set by Prime Minister Theresa May to "explain or change", should be welcomed as a clear signal to trigger policy change that works for, and represents, a diverse Britain.

While the report does not put forward any solutions, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has already proposed targeting 20 'hotspots' where it will offer training and mentoring schemes to help those from minority ethnic backgrounds into work. Other departments will also be presenting their responses.

Transformative change is needed, not just from the government but across local authorities, employees, schools, communities and among individuals, too.

But moving forward, government departments must be careful not to throw the onus directly back on to those facing discrimination, rather than challenging oppression head-on.

As with the Casey Review,

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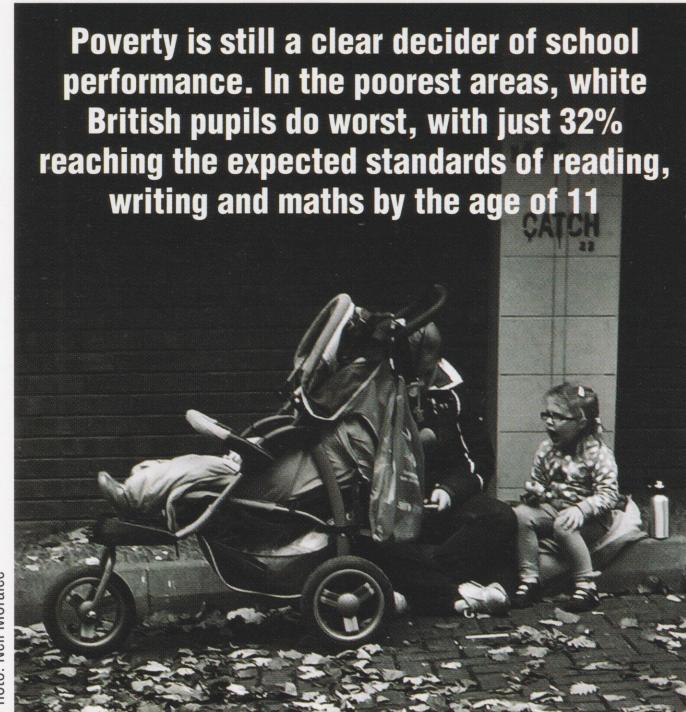


Photo: Neil Moralee

this latest audit puts the spotlight on women from Pakistani and Bangladeshi Muslim communities who are seen to be living "parallel lives" to wider society and who are, according to a cabinet source, "shockingly badly integrated".

Integration does not occur solely through efforts made by individuals but relies on the ability of all people to access opportunities equally, to engage with their community in a meaningful way and to be able to engage with structures that govern.

Support for these groups will require additional resources for English language provision and skills training, but an assimilationist approach that focuses on the promotion of British values will not help isolated and marginalised groups to integrate when

faced with severe structural inequality.

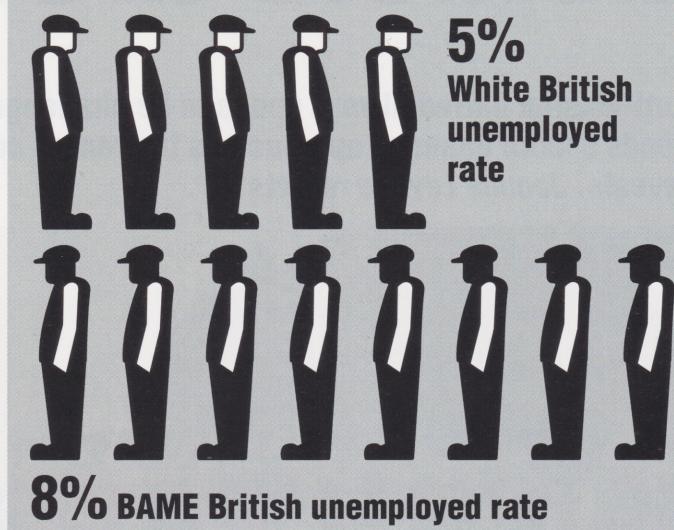
The structural racism highlighted by the audit inhibits processes of integration which, when seen as a 'choice' or a result of culture, place minority groups in a paradox.

Discrimination reliably reproduces social and economic inequity and integration initiatives will have to tackle discrimination alongside opening opportunities for marginalised people.

This audit might be uncomfortable reading but it is necessary and overdue. What is important now is that radical, positive, steps are taken to ensure discrimination is confronted and challenged and that communities and individuals are not further marginalised in the process.

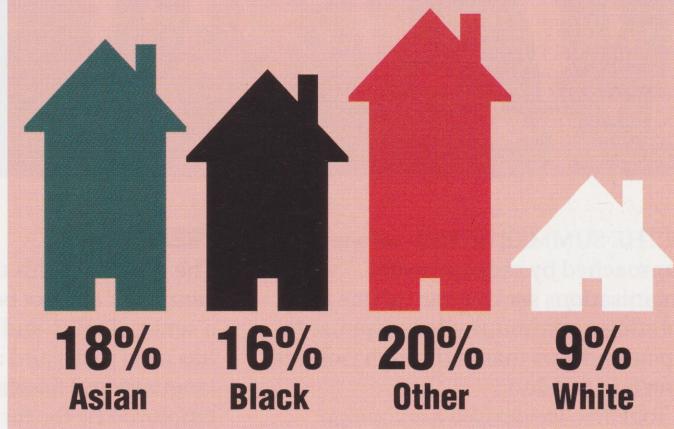
Poverty is still a clear decider of school performance. In the poorest areas, white British pupils do worst, with just 32% reaching the expected standards of reading, writing and maths by the age of 11

BAME Brits are almost twice as likely to be unemployed

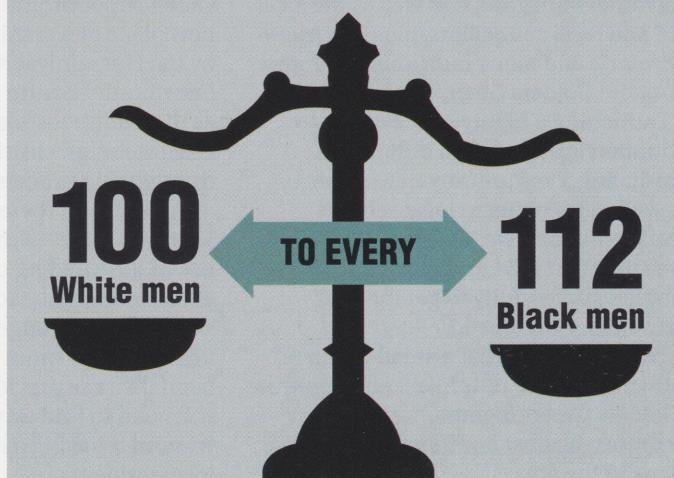


BAME groups were all more likely to live in households with a low income than the White ethnic groups.

% of households in persistent poverty



Black men are most likely to be found guilty at crown court



Golders Green: Balancing

Anti-Muslim hatred always needs to be challenged but tackling misplaced fear and ignorance needs a more nuanced approach as the recent controversy over a new mosque in Golders Green reveals. Jemma Levene reports



IN THE SUMMER of 2015, we were approached by various Jewish organisations seeking our advice in creating a community-led response to a planned nazi march through Golders Green in London.

Together, we devised a campaign called Golders Green Together, a positive response to the nazis' virulent (and antisemitic) hate. Our campaign brought together Jewish community organisations, local synagogues, churches and other faith groups as well as the local MP and local councillors, plus *The Jewish Chronicle* and many individual volunteers from the Golders Green area.

Launching a highly-successful Thunderclap campaign online and producing a community newspaper, as well as speaking to local schools and businesses, we "dressed" the area in bright gold and green and lobbied successfully to get the nazi demonstration moved.

How sad, then, that a small group of individuals have now hijacked the phrase "Golders Green Together" and used it to protest against another faith group's plans in the area.

PREJUDICE

The difference this time is that their campaign has not been about creating a sense of unity and togetherness but has used racist and anti-Muslim language and falsehoods more usually employed by the far right and self-styled (anti-Muslim) "counter-jihadists" who push the notion that Muslims are "taking over".

The proposed application for change of use of the former Golders Green Hippodrome from a church to a new place of worship, submitted by the Hussainiyat Al-Rasool Al-Adham Community Centre (also known as the Centre for Islamic Enlightenment), clearly needs to go through due process.

Anecdotally, there have been some localised issues with parking and with use of the building out of hours which are seemingly already being addressed. The building is large and, if the new use will be far more intensive than has been the case previously, Barnet Council will need to find ways to manage that without it having a negative impact on local residents.

DIVERSE BOROUGH

For context, the population of the borough of Barnet as a whole is about 15% Jewish and 10% Muslim while Golders Green is 37% Jewish and 12% Muslim. However, up until now there has only been one (Sunni) mosque in the vicinity so one might be excused for thinking that the establishment of a second (Shia) mosque ought not to be cause for a huge amount of comment.

So how does one respond to the creation of the ironically named "Golders Green Together" group, the Facebook page for which seems to be a safe space for people to post anti-Muslim and racist hate? And what about the petition of more than 5,500 signatures, most of them from Jewish people, protesting at the "disruptions caused by the new religious centre at the Hippodrome Golders Green"?

And, if these responses are troubling, is the Jewish community speaking out against them? Are there other more measured responses that have been happening behind the scenes?

Finally, what can be done differently?

Fear and Racism

POSITIVE RESPONSES

The good news is that every mainstream communal organisation and leader to have spoken or written publicly on this matter has challenged the campaigners' divisive and racist rhetoric and many have suggested or even initiated other responses.

It transpires that the rabbis of the largest Orthodox and Reform synagogues in the area, Rabbi Harvey Belovski and Rabbi Mark Goldsmith, together with Mitzvah Day Interfaith Chair Daniella Pears, had already sought to arrange a meeting with the Centre for Islamic Enlightening, something only delayed by the cluster of religious festivals that have absorbed both faiths.

Since the story broke, things have moved apace and the Board of Deputies of British Jews has published a joint statement with the Hussainiyat Al-Rasool Al-Adham Community Centre, stating that both were looking forward to sharing a good relationship, having visited and met each other's leaderships.

Moreover, numerous comment pieces condemning the racism and bigotry displayed by a small minority have appeared in the Jewish press, most notably a long piece from Stephen Pollard, editor of *The Jewish Chronicle*.

We hope those who have publicly expressed the vilest of views will realise that they are (wildly) out of step with the community they purport to speak for.

COUNTER-JIHADISTS

Unsurprisingly, it did not take long for members of the international, anti-Muslim "counter-jihad" movement deliberately and cynically to exploit this issue for their own divisive ends. In their wake travels intolerance as they banner-wave for sectarian hate and communal hatred.

The notorious anti-Muslim activist Pamela Geller (of Atlas Shrugs blog) – banned from entering the UK following a HOPE not hate campaign in 2013 – published an article titled "Plan to Open Mega-Mosque in Iconic London Jewish Community".

It opened by asking: "What practicing [sic] Jew wouldn't enjoy the daily nails-on-a-chalkboard supremacist cry of the Muslim call to prayer?" and called the Islamic Centre a "mosquestrosity".

Similarly, the right-wing American think-tank, the Gatestone Institute, which has published numerous anti-Muslim

authors like the Dutch far right politician Geert Wilders, also published a story about "London's New Mega Mosque".

Meanwhile, here in the UK the tiny anti-Muslim party Liberty GB has tweeted about the issue as have numerous other anti-Muslim social media accounts.

The inflammatory language of this campaign has added to a destructive cycle of misinformation that feeds into the fear and mistrust of those who are not inherently racist.

LOOKING AHEAD

So, how to respond to the 5,500+ individuals who have signed the petition against the new mosque?

Firstly, it is important to note that some of the signatures are fraudulent. I have heard of several people who have found their name on the petition and have been horrified enough to appeal directly to Barnet Council to have them removed. It is likely there are many others who do not even know they were added.

Judy Silkoff was one. "When I started to receive messages asking me to sign the Hippodrome e-petition I felt extremely uncomfortable," she says. "I recognise the valid local concerns about noise and congestion, but as Jews we know only too well what it feels like to experience antisemitism dressed up as environmental concerns."

"I find it very upsetting that some Jews are using these same tactics on others," she adds. "We share our "space" in this country with people of many different faiths or none and NW11 does not "belong" to any one community. By building warm relations with people of faith like ourselves, we can only increase community well-being, not diminish it."

Judy has since gone on to contact her local branch of Nisa-Nashim, the Muslim-Jewish women's network, after her daughter had a very positive experience with an interfaith programme at the JW3 centre.

Nevertheless, there are still thousands of people, certainly not all residents of Golders Green but all holding some kind of affinity or empathy with the area, the vast majority of whom are Jewish, who felt moved to sign this petition.

Do we dismiss them all as racists? Or do we see this as a window of opportunity where genuine fear, mistrust and lack of knowledge have been exposed, and where there is space for

creative and positive responses which can be made relevant?

This whole episode has exposed the fact that many people are unable to separate their fear of Islamist-inspired extremism and related terrorism from ordinary Muslims. It is this fear, and confusion that anti-Muslim extremists seek to exploit.

THE MORE WE KNOW EACH OTHER

As Jonathan Boyd, executive director of the Institute for Jewish Policy Research (IJPR), has commented, the research behind their recently published report on antisemitism included a 50% drop in unfavourable attitudes towards Jews among people who actually knew a Jew.

The IJPR's research revealed this applied to all groups. Boyd said: "The more people know Muslims, or Hindus, or Christians, the less likely they are to view them unfavourably. The figures are slightly different in each case, but the trend is the same regardless. The more we know one another, the more likely we are to see the good in one another."

When faced with community tensions or mistrust, it is easy to reach out to the usual suspects – interfaith circles, the "activists" – and bring them together for a meeting, a photo opportunity or, at best, a shared meal.

The hardest thing, though, will be to find ways of reaching people who are not faith leaders, who are not already involved in interfaith engagement... those who are genuinely fearful and uninformed and also those who lead busy lives and don't see this kind of issue as a personal priority.

Our Fear and HOPE research, undertaken this summer, shows a growing division between people who have an affinity with a faith community and those who have an antipathy towards any faith at all.

We can see this playing out in myriad ways, for example, in the framing of the scandal of illegal schools through the lens of faith schooling (when the vast majority of illegal schools are not faith-based) or in the recent example of Balliol College Oxford where the Christian Union was barred by the student union from holding a stall.

Surely now, more than ever, is the time for faith communities, including their more disinterested and fearful members, to look for and find ways to interact and get to know each other better.

The National Front at 50

Part 1: The Tyndall Years

By Matthew Collins

In October, the National Front (NF) belatedly commemorated its fifty years as a political party with a small rally in a Birmingham pub.

That it survives as a household name – or that it survives at all in the public mind – is more as a byword and symbol of racism, fascism, nazism and violence.

For over fifty years, “NF” has struck notes of fear and revulsion in the depths of British society that have outweighed its numerical strength, popularity and electoral impact, none of which have ever been more than derisory.

The fiftieth anniversary commemoration was delayed because, as the NF’s long traditions dictate, the party was in the throes of an internal schism.

The now tiny group focuses primarily in memory of, and warped tribute to, one of its former Chairmen and one of its fiercest critics in his later political life: John Tyndall.

The NF’s history of splits and internecine warfare

ensures that few (if any) former leaders are recognised. Terry Blackham, the convicted gun runner, who came to save the party in the early 90’s as it faced being wound down, refused an invitation to address the crowd.

Andrew Brons, the one-time MEP for the British National Party and NF Chairman from 1980-84, did make a brief speech. Brons must find it quite galling that, despite his far greater achievements politically, people only seem to want to talk about his former predecessor and long-term factional rival, Tyndall.

From the British National Party (BNP) to National Action, the English Defence League (EDL) and even UKIP, there are extraordinary lessons in understanding how the far right in Britain has modelled itself, how it has organised, rarely triumphed and ultimately failed electorally and organisationally at every turn.

Few Britons who lived in the 1970s and 80s did so without knowing of the NF which, notably, ignited and

radicalised social movements formed solely to destroy it. And yet, even as a poor, almost sickly imitation of what it once was, the NF has still staggered on.

Perhaps only the English Defence League (EDL), with which the NF now shares a tiny and fragmented constituency on the wider far right in the UK, can match it in terms of such spectacular decline in popularity and importance, both groups being wracked with personality and drug problems.

The NF was launched in February 1967 as a political party campaigning to stop the influx of brown faces, foreign goods and the reversal of Britain’s near-terminal imperial decline.

Irrespective of those factors, the NF was a creature born out of an ideology that had existed and survived prior to, and irrespective of, them. Those who would form the party in 1967 sought to merge primarily immigration control-concerned organisations and groups

with hard-line fascist and national socialist groupings.

This is not to say that ordinary people, wary of immigration and alarmed at Britain’s declining industrial and social position, were not drawn to the NF.

Like the BNP, the EDL and even UKIP, the leaders’ who made them “great”, were also the Achilles heel. The pettiness, the souring of political and personal relations and excessive extremism were also their downfall.

In all their most dark hours on the cusp of either furtherance or failure and futility, these organisations were all compared with the NF.

John Tyndall (1934-2005), with whom forever the NF now appears to wish (and, in many regards are doomed) to be associated with, was initially considered too extreme to join the fledgling party.

Although he tempered his outlandish Nazi behaviour, Tyndall was a known and unrepentant Hitler admirer.



The early leadership feared he would take over their fascist anti-immigration party and drive it further to the extremes...as he eventually did in 1972.

Prior to the NF, Tyndall had formed, split and divided a series of fascist, paramilitary and nazi organisations. During that period, Tyndall formed a toxic double act with Martin Webster (born 1943). And so it would become that Tyndall was the "posh one" (despite a modest middle class upbringing) and Webster was the more common, working class boy from West London.

Not only were Tyndall and Webster poisonous, they were, in comparison with their competition, politically far more astute and brazen. No more than two years after being quietly admitted into the National Front, Tyndall was its leader.

However, the NF was not (and never was) under Tyndall an avowedly openly Nazi party. Both "blessed" and dogged throughout his entire personal and political life with self-importance, pomp and arrogance, Tyndall was a peculiarly *British* Nazi.

His belief was, despite a lifelong deference to Adolf Hitler and German Nazism,



Expelled by Tyndall in November 1979, former Deputy Chairman Andrew Fountaine (above) launches the National Front Constitutional Movement

that he himself held a similarly worthy intellect and brilliance to the German *Führer* and that the British were themselves of a similarly masterful (if not shared) race and "stock" as the Germans.

This never stopped him however, often in no subtle terms to the initiated, making it perfectly clear where his personal and political aspirations were drawn from historically.

Britain in the 1970's was a country still very much living in – and driven by – the immediate post-war past. Both Tyndall and Webster

NATIONAL FRONT
THE CONSTITUTIONAL MOVEMENT WITHIN THE PARTY
P.O. BOX 66, GREENWOOD ROAD, HACKNEY, LONDON, E.8.

16th November 1979

Dear Member,

We, the persons subscribing our names to the attached document, are at one in the opinion that in the best interests of the Party a number of changes must be made.

We ask you to read the document, not once, but several times, in order to grasp the magnitude of the collapse in morals, in finance, in administration, and most importantly in political credibility, that has taken place in the last few years.

Every organisation that is successful has a set of rules to guide itself and its members, and our set of rules is the National Front Constitution. It is because our Constitution has been breached that we have seen it necessary to take action, and equally and oppositely we are taking that action as a Constitutional Movement within the Party.

There has been much talk of splits and factions, and a number of bulletins on the subject have been issued by Mr Tyndall and Mr Webster with both limited and wide circulations.

This is the only bulletin that will be issued by us, and it is so because, we believe that it is only necessary to explain once to sensible people in order to reduce chaos to order. We believe that most of the people in our Party are sensible.

If you find yourself in agreement with us that something needs to be done, and done speedily, then rally round the Constitution and proclaim it. We are first and foremost British in our outlook and we remember that at times of crisis the British Nation has always been an example to the world. Within our Party we must now set an example of that genuine British commonsense can achieve.

Yours very sincerely,

Andrew Fountaine

For and on behalf of those whose signatures are reproduced on the reverse side.

played down their "youthful indiscretions" the decade before of wearing swastika armbands or belonging to organisations that had openly promoted the belief that Adolf Hitler had been right.

After taking control of the NF in 1972, Webster was confident enough to declare (whilst being secretly recorded) that the much noticeable growth of the fledgling National Front was



Webster edited the party newspaper National Front news

National Front News
5p
ISSUE No. 13

RACE 'WHITE PAPER' SPELLS IT OUT....

LABOUR-TORIES AGREE: "BLACK IMMIGRATION MUST CONTINUE"

IMAGINE AN ENDLESS QUEUE OF COLOURED IMMIGRANTS POURING INTO BRITAIN. THEN IMAGINE A COMMITTEE OF TORY AND LABOUR M.P.s WHO MOVE ONE GROUP OF IMMIGRANTS FROM THE FRONT TO THE BACK

**Unveiled:
The great
Tory**

in essence the building of "...a well-oiled Nazi machine."

They were helped in blurring the lines between their own nazism and the need to act urgently to close the doors to further non-white immigration by Ugandan President General Idi Amin's decision to expel all that country's Asian population. In 1972, Amin gave some 80,000 people just 90 days to leave Uganda, describing them as "bloodsuckers."

Some 50,000 of those Ugandan Asians had British passports. In response, Leicester council even took the step of taking out newspaper advertisements advising people leaving Uganda not to go to Leicester as it was overcrowded.

From the moment Tyndall and Webster took over the National Front, the party grew dramatically. Although he was more than convinced this was due to his own supreme brilliance, Tyndall acknowledged later that the Ugandan crisis helped him.

Tyndall's rise to party leader had only been possible with the tacit agreement of the party's founder and first Chairman, AK Chesterton. Born in South Africa, Chesterton had for a short time in the 1930's been a publicist for Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists. At the outbreak of the Second World War, like many of Mosley's followers and other fascists, Chesterton saw active service for King and Country while their leader was jailed.

After the war, Chesterton carried on with his antisemitic politics and published the magazine *Candour* which, rather like Tyndall's personal organ *Spearhead*, became a vehicle for his rampant antisemitism and exceptional self-belief. (Tyndall's *Spearhead* was also the name of his paramilitary group).

Chesterton had secretly promised Tyndall that he could eventually join the NF when he was convinced that Tyndall was no longer an avowed nazi. In anticipation

of that moment, Tyndall began a long process of courting and convincing Chesterton of his political maturity. Chesterton acquiesced and Tyndall was finally admitted to the party sometime between late 1969 and early 1970. Chesterton passed away in South Africa in 1973.

In a changing environment, the NF found its recruitment challenged by the wider social and industrial unrest. Tyndall favoured parroting anti-Jewish and anti-Communist conspiracy theories about business. He was very much in both principle and practice against the organisation of workers on class lines.

In his very formative political years he had toyed with socialism but either failed to understand "Marxist" economics or realised it was against his self-interest. He admitted being drawn to its polemics and idealism but, instead, stuck with his favoured form of "patriotism."

Frustratingly for some inside the party, this meant the party was not able to capitalise on growing industrial unrest. There was a national miners' strike in 1972 and the National Front squabbled bitterly behind closed doors about developing a policy on union-organised strikes.

There were some NF members who might have had professional or cultural sympathy with those striking and, indeed, those within the party who had argued in favour of supporting striking workers on racial as opposed to class lines.

But coal miners, in South Wales and Scotland especially with a long and proud history of anti-fascist struggle, would have none of it, confirming Tyndall's anti-working class prejudices by ensuring the NF stayed away.

The one intervention the NF did try was during a strike by Asian workers in the Imperial Typewriters dispute in Leicester in August 1974. Initially, white workers had refused to support Asian colleagues in a strike for equal

The National Front Leadership Tree

50 years of fascism, factionalism and infighting.

Year	Name	
67-70	AK Chesterton	Alcoholism and depression forced him to stand down.
70-72	John O'Brien	Left over issues of Nazis in the party
72-74	John Tyndall	The main Nazi in the party.
74-76	John Kingsley Read	Led what was identified as a "Strasserite" faction against Tyndall.
76-80	John Tyndall	Took the party to court and won.
80-84	Andrew Brons	Lecturer in politics, with a history of Nazi activism
84-86	Martin Wingfield	Betting shop manager and journalist. Was sent to prison
1986	<i>The Party splits into two warring factions.</i>	
86-89	Nick Griffin and Patrick Harrington	Ran their part of the party into the ground
89-90	Harrington closes down party	
86-90	Ian Anderson	
1990	<i>Reverting to the National Front</i>	
90-95	Ian Anderson	Hard drinking Anderson tried to change the party name, splitting into two more factions.
95-98	John McCauley	Kept the party stagnant and irrelevant
98-09	Bernard Holmes	Battled admirably against interlopers expelled from the BNP.
09-10	Mick Shore	Led a tiny faction in and then out of the party and then into EDL
09-14	Ian Costard	Led one faction of the party known as the Southern faction
13-16	Kev Bryan	Led a northern faction into conflict against the southern faction
2016	Dave MacDonald	Held party together (badly) when Bryan took ill
2017	Kev Bryan	Returned to the role as Chairman



AK Chesterton



John Tyndall



John Kingsley Read



Andrew Brons



Martin Wingfield



Nick Griffin



Patrick Harrington



Ian Anderson

pay and the NF organised protests in support of the white workers but soon found themselves confronted by the left, the wider trade union movement and organised Asian workers.

Although the NF (and later the British National Party) would attempt minor interventions to racialise any disputes about pay and labour, the biggest winners on the front of organising the working class into action during the 1970's would be the left.

As the NF grew in a period of growing industrial unrest and a rapidly changing workforce emboldened by changes in the Race Relations acts of 1965 and 1968, so did the left.

Between 1972-1973, the International Socialists, later to become the Socialist Workers Party, in particular was also experiencing a large influx of new members drawn from heavy industries and the London docks.

The growth would form the basis of the future Anti-Nazi League (ANL) as would the Indian Workers' Association (IWA) that had helped organise Asian workers at Imperial Typewriters. Although there was now growing militancy against the NF, a large-scale unified effort to counter the NF physically did not develop nationally until the formation of the Anti-Nazi League (ANL) in 1977.

In February 1974, the NF fought 54 seats in the General Election. Reaching the 50-candidate mark allowed the party a five-minute televised election broadcast and, as a result, a further increase in membership ensued.

The results for the NF however, were poorer than they had privately expected. The party managing only to save only eight deposits [5% of the vote]. Six of those seats were in the north and east of London and the other two were in Leicester.

With a hung parliament, the UK went back to the polls in October 1974 and this



(above) National Front march in Yorkshire
Photo: Wikimedia

(right) Tyndall and the NF turned their venom against the Tories after Mrs Thatcher stole their most popular policy

time, despite the derisory electoral performance earlier in the year, the party's growth allowed it to field 90 candidates and obtain two televised election broadcasts.

In the midst of fevered electioneering Tyndall was challenged as leader by an "anti-Nazi" faction of the party, concerned by a growing series of exposés of Tyndall's past and, at the time, current foreign friends, mainly Nazis.

There was also mounting public concern about the growing violence of both NF and anti-NF protests. In June of that year, anti-fascist student Kevin Gately, 21, became the first person to die at a public protest on the UK mainland since 1919.

Tyndall found himself back as Chairman of the party in early 1976 after being briefly expelled in 1975. His period out of the leadership position further hardened his bilious hatred for much of the party's democratic apparatus that had been written into the constitution by the party's founders, in part, in case he ever became its leader.

No. 129 JULY 1979

Spearhead 20p

'Boat People' flood in with Thatcher at the helm . . .

TORIES AGAIN TURN BRITAIN INTO DUSTBIN OF ASIA

Tyndall's dethroned opponent John Kingsley Read went onto form a tiny rival party, the National Party, in 1976. Soon after, it gained two seats on Blackburn Council. It has widely been described as a "Strasserite" party but the reality is that Kingsley Read was, in the main, a racist, antisemitic, former Tory.

Although the party did attract some who would later be defined as or define themselves as Strasserite, like most of the splits within the NF, the overwhelming cause would appear to be personality and clashes of egos and interests.

The National Party was every bit as racist and

antisemitic as the National Front but Kingsley Read was much, much less politically astute than Tyndall.

After two years of bitter uncertainty for the party, Tyndall and Webster were back in the driver's seat. As the NF reorganised, Tyndall and Webster enjoyed and revelled in their party's notoriety for racism and confrontation.

The NF was now a household name and there was very little veneer any longer about its nature and intentions. Violence had always been central to fascism and Nazism. While the NF courted it, Tyndall also tried desperately to foster an image of himself as a serious and intelligent family man who was firmly in the corner of traditional family values.

He openly bragged how he refused to let his wife Valerie wear trousers other than for housework. He was as misogynist as he was homophobic. Webster however, was openly gay.

Tyndall was not a particularly popular man with the rank and file. Often, people made fun of him to alleviate some of the frustrations and tedium they found in his pomposity. But, as the politics of the party dictated then and now, the role of leading the NF is often left to whoever is foolish enough to want the job.

In 1977, the NF created its own bit of Jubilee history. Resulting from a series of Metropolitan Police actions, primarily directed against London's black community in May of that year, a series of raids and arrests were carried out to tackle alleged street crime.

Seizing the opportunity, the National Front applied for a march in Lewisham, south East London. The resulting events made headlines around the world as black and white Londoners came out to confront the fascists and stop them.

On the day of the march, more than 200 people were arrested and over 100 people (including 55 police officers)

were injured. It was the first time that riot shields were deployed by police outside of Northern Ireland.

For the National Front, Lewisham was either a disaster or a great success. The opinions of two former NF Chairmen oscillate, exemplifying perhaps, how strands of opinion have varied in the NF throughout its history.

Tyndall did note a "hardening media attitude" towards the NF from 1977 onwards but, of course, he also attributed much of this to the "powers at work in the mass media." [Jews]

In 1978, the Labour Party devoted a whole election broadcast to attacking the NF while the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) and *World in Action*, Britain's hardest hitting current affairs show at the time, also weighed in with exposés of the NF and its true nature.

While the NF had spent much of its efforts politically battling against the left, the Conservative Party also had its own weapon against the NF: Margaret Thatcher, elected leader of the party in 1975, as a strong and robust right-winger with a fancy for attacking trades unions.

In the winter of 1978-79, Britain was plunged into industrial strife as the Labour prime minister James Callaghan fell foul of the unions in an attempt to control inflation.

Callaghan hit public sector workers particularly hard, plunging a frozen Britain into the so-called "winter of discontent" which at the same time hardened Thatcher's position on trades unions and the public sector, both of which she would go on to assault after her election.

In January 1978, Thatcher gave *World in Action* an interview to mark her third year as leader of the Conservative Party. The interviewer, Gordon Burns, began by asking Thatcher about immigration as she had already mooted that the Conservatives, if in power, would make drastic

cuts to immigration, even a "clear prospect of an end to immigration."

But it was one particular soundbite that was to have a particularly damaging effect on the NF: "but there was a committee which looked at it [immigration] and said that, if we went on as we are, then by the end of the century there would be four million people of the new Commonwealth or Pakistan here. Now, that is an awful lot and I think it means that people are really rather afraid that this country might be rather swamped by people with a different culture and, you know, the British character has done so much for democracy, for law and done so much throughout the world that if there is any fear that it might be swamped people are going to react and be rather hostile to those coming in."

On 3 May 1979, Britain went to the polls for the fourth time that decade. The NF stood in 301 seats. Its results were disastrous, the party polling just over 190,000 votes, around 600 votes per seat.

This was the cue for the party to split. Tyndall and his supporters tried to temper the mass disillusionment felt within the ranks by reminding people that their expectations had been unrealistic.

But not everyone in the National Front had been, like Tyndall, a dedicated to conspiracy theorist, who could brush off such a crushing disappointment as his ideology and expectations had braced him to do even before polling.

For many in the party, it became apparent that the NF was hammered not just because of Thatcher's promises but also because the party had been exposed as a "Nazi Front." Photographs of Tyndall in Nazi uniform in front of portraits of Hitler had been plastered across newspapers and television from 1977 onwards but most

regularly in the run up to the election. And it was not just the NF staring into the abyss. At some stage, either in the run up to the election or in the aftermath of it, Tyndall and Webster fell out.

Tyndall began an attempt to protect and secure his position by pushing the party to drop its internal democratic structures, which the ruling Directorate refused to do.

Then, suddenly, dramatically and most conveniently, Tyndall "discovered" a "homosexual network" active in the party. Tyndall again asked for greater (dictatorial) powers to fight against this network (Webster) which he felt was destabilising the party.

"It did not seem too immodest to believe that I had greater capacity for judgement than the majority, if not all, of the other members of our ruling body", he later said, recalling the debilitating fight that ripped the party apart.

The constitution, which prohibited mass expulsions and which Tyndall had himself used to get himself reinstated in 1976 was, now, in his memoirs "laughable in respect of the powers it gave me to make decisions."

One decision the party did allow Tyndall to make was the expulsion of the party's Deputy Chairman, Andrew Fountaine who had indicated he would stand against Tyndall for the leadership of the party.

From then on, the party simply descended into bitter civil war and Fountaine would form his own National Front Constitutional Movement as the fighting intensified.

Tyndall resigned on 31 January 1980 in the hope that the party would, in his absence, see sense and call him back. Instead, he was replaced by Andrew Brons and the next chapter in the National Front's warped and turbulent history was about to begin.

■ Part Two of this brief history of the National Front will appear in the next issue of HOPE not hate

The longest secret comes to an end

Matthew Collins meets a lifelong nazi who has hidden the fact that he is both Jewish and gay

Prior to reacquainting ourselves, the last time I saw John Kevin Wilshaw was in 1992, on Brick Lane, deep in London's East End. I was working as a converted mole inside the far right while Kevin was looking down the barrel of a two-year sentence (reduced to three months on appeal) for vandalising a mosque in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire.

A year later, I would be living in Australia, neither caring nor thinking about what had happened to the likes of John Kevin Wilshaw.

They were dark and violent times. Brick Lane was a battleground fought over by fascists and anti-fascists for control of a small piece of ground at the top of the Sunday market.

We had both witnessed and taken part in violence there. Thousands of far right activists from across the world also had over the decades, making a pilgrimage there.

After the market, we would all head off for drunken and volatile afternoon binges in a rabbit warren of dark and smoke-filled backstreet boozers where internecine squabbles between rival nazi factions and gangs were settled, alliances forged, reputations made and heads kicked in for even the smallest infraction.

Some would move away from it, grow up or grow tired of the boring and boorish individuals who shaped "the movement" with threats and violence, Nazi salutes, swastika badges, a constellation of dark self-loathing mired

in bitterness, hatred and defeat.

For Kevin, since 1974 and even a little before, this has been his world: the violent underworld and underbelly of British fascism and nationalism.

It began as his escape from the tedium and violence of a lonely 1960's childhood in rural Cumbria.

And even now, twenty-five years after our nazi lives first crossed in East London, Kevin once more has criminal convictions looming about something he has written on social media.

The Prevent Programme fears the fifty-eight-year-old divorcee may be radicalising young people, marching as he has done on a number of occasions to his local Wetherspoons pub in a sinister-looking long leather coat and a variety of Nazi era headgear to drink alone in a dark corner.

It is in those dark corners that Kevin has had to confront his loneliness and his fears. "I'm not likely to radicalise anyone," he moans. "Even my own son is embarrassed of me. To him I'm just a sad old nazi, but he doesn't know the truth. Who does know the truth? You, you do I guess." Our meetings are punctuated by moments of dark melancholy.

Perhaps, it was in such moments of darkness with only his fears and secrets that Kevin took to social media, tweeting at me in 2015. His tweets were suggestive, curious and angry questions about why I had betrayed everything he had believed in since his childhood: "The Movement", symbolised by the





sinister black shirts of the Mosleyites, the secret symbols and correspondence of the British Movement, the unstoppable hate machine that was the National Front. This "Movement" has been Kevin's crutch of racial hatred, holding him up against memories of a cruel childhood of paternal violence.

A rural village bobby, Kevin's father, had beaten everyone and everything he could. Daily. Once the whisky ran dry, out would come the fists. In their small police house, there was nowhere to escape the drunken rampages of the brutal Wilshaw Senior. Kevin's mother shielded her three terrified children the best she could but there was only so much she could do.

And Kevin's father taunted Kevin's mother Patricia too: he'd call her "Rachel", sneering and shouting unimaginable insults at her.

Wilshaw Senior turned out to be not quite the charming man that had swept her off her feet when they met at the War Office in 1948. Wilshaw Senior had been the brash country lad from Cumbria and she the small town Jewish girl from Rotherham.

Hadn't Kevin always known his mum was Jewish? "Suspected?" he offers. But yes, he knew. During one episode in the family home in the 1970's – and as Kevin was immersing himself in far right politics and Nazism – his mother had screamed at him that "those people" would have killed her for being Jewish. He never responded.

Was it unpalatable having a Jewish mother? "No, no" he splutters. "I loved my mum. I still think about her every day and our life with that man."

"But I joined the National Front (NF) in 1974 to escape so much, to belong to something different, to go places that seemed so far away like London, Birmingham and even Manchester. It was to be my escape.... I don't know, I just don't know..."

Back in 1974, Cumbria had fewer than a dozen NF members. The sheer size of the region made it difficult for them all to meet regularly unless they were leaving Cumbria to go south together on a march or to a rally.

"Thinking about life in Cumbria back then, I would say it was not very *diverse*. We talked a lot about the hidden Jews in

society and how they dominated where we were travelling to, like London or Manchester. There was a massive Jewish conspiracy afoot. Immigration seemed to have very little to do with it.

"And we had all sorts of people. Ex-military types – officers and whatnot, civil servants, some seemingly sensible, decent people. But I don't think any of them were *not* nazis. Like I said, immigration really had not come to Cumbria and I don't even recall whether we had a television back then or not."

Before the National Front won Kevin's affections, there had been the ultimately subversive British Movement, men in suits and uniforms, serious men, who wanted to turn Britain into some kind of pre-war Germany. Kevin was attracted to their secrecy, people who like him, had something to hide.

"I'd been exchanging correspondence with the British Movement since the late 60s and most of the people in our branch had been or were still in the British Movement (BM). It was before the skinheads took the BM over in later years and destroyed it.

"But then [John] Tyndall took over the



NF and it really, really began to go places. You would've had to live on the moon not to have heard about them. And because Tyndall came from the same sort of background as those that ran the BM, it felt like I had been in on it [The NF] from the beginning."

Tyndall and the fledgling NF were politically assisted in 1972 by Idi Amin's decision to expel all Asians from Uganda.

"Ugandan Asians were arriving by what we were told was the plane or truckload and were filling up cities and towns with foreign practices and stealing jobs..." his words and thoughts tail off.

By the late 1970s, Kevin was fully plugged in to the NF and he would eventually (much later) go on to be elected as its organiser in Cumbria. Making the plunge into fascism is itself an introduction to violence, not that Kevin was any stranger to a bloody face: "They were such violent times, as I recall. At home and out on the streets. Everywhere the NF went (and still does) there is violence."

Despite Kevin and the thousands of others like him who began to believe the NF was on the verge of a major electoral

breakthrough, the organisation actually went into near terminal decline after the 1979 General Election. It was "robbed", as its members felt, by the incoming prime minister Margaret Thatcher undermining them with her vocal concerns about Britain being "swamped" by immigrants.

Despite electoral disappointment and bloody noses for his troubles, Kevin had by now discovered another benefit of those long treks to big cities in support of a dwindling party and its unwanted ideology.

"I was gay, I *am* gay," he says almost startling himself. You get the impression he has not said it aloud too often. "And now the only one who matters who does not know, is my son," he says. Perhaps it may mend their relationship, give some answers to his secrecy, his dark moods and despair? Kevin shrugs. He hopes so.

"I went to a lot of gay clubs on my own, but there has always been a thriving gay scene in the far right as long as you don't get caught or talk about it. I never did. I never told anyone. In the early 80s, the NF used to hold these little "parties" for gay members, but I never went.

"My ex-wife knew I was gay. She came to some clubs with me after the marriage began to break down to try and help me deal with it, but obviously I found it very, very difficult to confront or admit it openly." Her patience ran out when, in 1996, after just three years of marriage, she cited Adolf Hitler as "the other man" in their relationship during their divorce.

In 1989, Kevin left Cumbria and his parents' home to take a position as mental health nurse at Stoke Mandeville Hospital. Even though, in 1992, he served a prison sentence for his attack on Aylesbury Mosque, the hospital kept his job open. Nor did the management mind that in the same year, he had been selected as an NF parliamentary candidate.

Despite being married ("I loved her and fancied her"), Kevin continued secretly to visit gay clubs, combining his trips to London and other major cities to engage in NF activity with those secret visits.

Since joining the NF in 1974, Kevin also joined dozens of other little groups but, in the main, he stayed loyal to the party even as it crashed into near insignificance.



NATIONAL FRONT

Name.....John Kevin Wilshaw.....

CADRE

P O Box 41, Norwich, NR3 2AH.

In 1986, he moved to the "Political Soldier" wing of the NF after a violent split in the party. The "Political Soldiers" were led by the future British National Party (BNP) leader and MEP Nick Griffin. His astonishing activism and his willingness to travel all over the country saw the faction earmark Kevin as having "great revolutionary potential" and dedication.

But in desperate decline, the group turned "weird" embracing some aspects of Islam and a deeply fanatical Catholicism. They also began to take up the idea of tracing the family lines of members to prove unequivocally that their links were with the blood and soil of the United Kingdom.

Fearing his mother's maiden name (and birth certificate) would expose him, Kevin switched to a different faction using the NF name – the so-called "Flag" faction – that was as violent, antisemitic and homophobic as everybody else. There were strong rumours that its leader (Ian Anderson) was gay. In 1990, at the NF's St George's Day Rally in South London, the same individual made a speech declaring that HIV and AIDS killing promiscuous gay men was "a bloody good thing." Sitting at the back of the room, Kevin clapped and cheered like everybody else. The night before he had been in London's Soho enjoying drinks and a party with London's gay community. "A few stolen minutes of truth," as he remembers it.

"I've led a lie. A terrible lie. You can't be a Gay, Jewish Nazi. You can't be either of those things, and yet I have been.

"The more and more fixated I got with and about those things, the more extreme I became, the more I wanted to push myself to be more extreme. For all of those things, the more I have aged and the more I have become extreme, I have hated myself."

Kevin, of course, does not consider himself Jewish. Yet, all the time he was dressing like a Nazi and taking part in anti-Jewish protests, even travelling to Germany to spread Holocaust denial materials, he has for over forty years mixed with the most extreme of Gay and Jew-haters.

Throughout that time, it sat with him at the very front of his mind that his beloved and treasured mother was herself Jewish...that the little Jewish woman, who had raised him under constant blows and barrages of criticism and violence in rural Cumbria, had suffered in protecting him and that he had brought swastikas and portraits and busts of Adolf Hitler into her home, all to make him feel normal, make him feel he belonged to something.

While he was attacking the Mosque

*I've led a lie.
A terrible lie.
You can't be a Gay,
Jewish Nazi.
You can't be either
of those things,
and yet I
have been.*

in Aylesbury, he did not spare a thought either for his sister who had married a Muslim man and converted to Islam in 1970. In spite of this, Kevin has remained close to her and her Muslim children throughout.

More than any other nazi I can think of, throughout my entire time following or being even involved the far right, I cannot think of anyone who has had so many challenges and hurdles to confront just so they could keep on hating.

We talk about exploring a Jewish identity and he seems keen. Would it make him feel closer to his mother who, under the weight of his father's sneering, fists and boots, only ever expressed her Jewishness once and, then, in desperate rage and sadness?

"I think so," he says. "There was no Jewish community where we lived in Cumbria." Everything Kevin knows about Judaism he has learned from *Mein Kampf* and the thousands upon thousands of booklets and leaflets that have been pumped-out through the years by Jew-haters.

Leaving prison in 1993, Kevin got married and joined the British National Party (BNP), led by the same John Tyndall who had, nearly twenty years before, persuaded him to embark on a political adventure with the hated NF.

Little had changed. The BNP was like the NF had been under Tyndall: violently antisemitic and involved in racist violence across the country, particularly in London's East End.

Some of the BNP had made sly comments, that C18 leader Wilf Browning remembered bumping into Wilshaw a couple of years before as they were both visiting the violent and openly Nazi Nicky Crane, a notoriously violent and almost iconic skinhead who died of



AIDS and repenting his past in 1993.

A year before Crane died, *The Sun* ran the outrageous headline "Nazi Nick is a Panzi". It reaffirmed that gays were not just hated in the obscurity and seediness of the far right. You could take your life in your own hands just by being a gay man anywhere.

"Crane," Kevin says, "was good to other gay nazis. He kept your secrets. He could get you into clubs where he worked on the doors. Deep down I think everyone knew he was gay. There was just no one big enough to take their problems with it up with him personally. So, they all ignored it. What made it easier for them to forgive him was his incredible size. He was built like a monster, and incredibly violent with it. He had to be accepted."

In 1999, David Copeland, a man with close ties to the BNP, set off three nail bombs across London. The third targeted the gay community with a bomb exploding at the Admiral Duncan pub on a warm Friday evening, killing three people.

As the BNP link broke, Kevin felt his world was finally collapsing, things only worsening when BNP *führer* Nick Griffin accused the victims of the terror attack as "flaunting their perversion".

After seventeen years with the BNP,



Kevin left in 2010. The party was collapsing anyway and once more Kevin was in a far right party that was being run into the ground by Nick Griffin.

Sadly, Kevin's mother had developed dementia. His marriage was over and he was trying to be a single father. He quit nursing ("I couldn't stand the sight of any more blood") and took a job in a factory but his home remained a shrine to his years and years of Nazi activity with busts and portraits of Hitler, books and VHS videos stacked neatly on shelves in commemoration of the Third Reich.

Despite being wracked with guilt about his secret lives, Kevin kept in touch with some of the fascists. "Even if you bore of them, you tire of them, they are after forty years of this game, the only people you actually know."

He soon found himself invited along to London Forum meetings, chaired by his old NF colleague Jez Turner. Feeling isolated and lonely, he began attending as an excuse to go to London in search of companionship again.

In 2015, Kevin's mother died. It was around that time the tweets to me began and Kevin began going to the pub dressed either menacingly as a Nazi or as an extra from an episode of 'Allo 'Allo!

We blogged about him, sitting

threateningly behind his keyboard and extolling the virtues of Nazism, angrily bashing his keyboard to the point where we actually queried if he was having a nervous breakdown.

Kevin threw himself one last time back into the Nazi movement, often associating with the "degenerate" likes of Eddie Stampton and Mark Atkinson of the fancifully titled Racial Volunteer Force. Along with Turner, they ran a series of controversial anti-Jewish and anti-Israel demonstrations last year. Kevin spoke at two of the meetings and rallies.

Last Christmas was spent at home on his own with his thoughts and memories for the first time in his life. "Everything was just feeling so empty and so pointless but I just had no idea how I could walk away from these people, these degenerate Nazis," he said.

When Kevin was arrested in February this year he was referred to the Prevent Programme that normally deals with teenagers in danger of being radicalised.

"I'd wanted out for so long" he says. He pulls on his lapels: "What sort of life is this, for fuck's sake?" he says. Kevin is not the first to send me nasty messages on social media before suddenly turning up on our door dazed and confused.

But John Kevin Wilshaw has been keeping his secrets and his membership of far right groups separate for more than forty years, a member of something like a dozen different and strange Nazi groups. His escape from his childhood and his other secrets have also imprisoned him for over forty years.

Cash and gentle coercion often persuades ex-fascists to attend a few more meetings or marches. Kevin took neither cash nor coercion before he could just attend no more. "Take the clothes, take my magazines and books and burn the lot please. I just want all of this out of what is left of my life and I want to begin living *my own life*."

Whatever the police and Crown Prosecution Service decide to do with Kevin later this year (he's still on bail), he says he can take it on the chin. He'll still go and meet a rabbi and just talk. Talk about himself, talk about his beloved mother.

We talk about how we both still learn that the world is changing and has changed. And we talk about the conversation he is going to have with his son, who is now twenty-three. "I think this will be as much of a relief to him as it will be for me."

And everybody else.



The “anti-vaxxers”

Tor Bach examines the re-emergence of a deadly movement

WHOOPING cough, measles and other diseases that were in retreat are now rising again in the Western world.

One reason for this is easily grasped: a growing number of people, often inspired by Hollywood celebrities, do not vaccinate their children against these ailments.

A growing and very insistent movement of so-called “anti-vaxxers” claims that vaccines are not only without effect but even harmful or deadly.

This movement, led mainly by people with no medical or scientific qualifications or other credentials, focuses heavily on the alleged side effects of different vaccines and claims that the positive effects the world has seen from certain vaccines, such as for polio, are produced by other factors.

According to the anti-vaxxers, vaccines are being developed by “Big Pharma” to serve this or that sinister goal be it mind control or more vague, undefined motives. Often we see that the anti-vaxxers also subscribe to a variety of other conspiracy theories, often seen within the far right, such as Holocaust denial or so-called 9/11-Truthism.

Fear of vaccines is nothing new. Only four years after Edward Jenner invented the smallpox vaccine in 1796,

critics started claiming that receiving the smallpox inoculation would actually turn the recipient into a cow. Since that time smallpox has been almost completely eradicated but there have been no verified reports of people turning into cows.

Despite this, the anti-vaxxers movement has reappeared in modern guise and gained momentum but still with no base in science. One of the oldest anti-vax-movements is the Anthroposophy movement, based on Rudolf Steiner's occultist revelations.

Steiner's followers say: *“Anthroposophic medicine sees humans as passing through successive earthly lives incarnated in a physical body, ‘laying one's karmic foundation in one incarnation for the next.’ Illness comes to an individual not by chance but as an opportunity to come to terms with one's karma from previous incarnations. Illness provides an individual with a message which ultimately assists in self-growth and development. The responsibility of a healer is to assist the human being experiencing the illness to deal with it karmically. Thus, prevention of an illness may be beneficial in the course of one incarnation but may not be for the entire soul life and development of the person.”*

Anthroposophy views that in early childhood years, soul-spiritual forces permeate the organism and have an organizing effect involving growth.

With the change of teeth, these forces work to a lesser degree as an organizing growth force and are transformed “into something soul-spiritual, let us say, into the force of memory, into the thought-forming force.” However, if transformation of these forces is too weak, then the organizing forces remain and new formations, i.e., cancer, may be encountered later in life. Rudolf Steiner indicated that childhood diseases come about from the opposite tendency, i.e., there is too much of the organizing force during childhood, “... too much of the soul-spiritual from his pre-human, pre-earthly life; this excess then lives itself out in the childhood illnesses.” It is believed that these forces, i.e., childhood diseases, need to be dealt with karmically.” (Source: <http://www.anthromed.org/Article.aspx?artpk=764>)

According to these “unorthodox” beliefs, Steiner fans tend to believe that measles is healthy and promotes the mental development of a child. Thus, there have been observed so-called infection-circles where parents introduce their

children to measles infection.

Other anti-vaxxers busy themselves with pseudo-science or fraudulent research. Such was the case with former medical doctor Andrew Wakefield who, in 1998, wrote an article in the world-renowned medical journal *The Lancet*, claiming that his research showed that the MMR vaccine – against measles, mumps and rubella – caused autism.

It was later revealed that Wakefield's paper was a fraud, and that no connection between the MMR vaccine and autism could be established. *The Lancet* subsequently retracted his article and Wakefield was stripped of his credentials and is no longer allowed to practice medicine in the UK.

His falsified and discredited research, however, has spread like wildfire, still actively being used by anti-vaxxers and extended to include a conspiracy theory describing Wakefield as a martyr, with “Big Pharma” starring as the evil force behind the plot.

Statistics show a sharp rise of measles outbursts in the UK after the turn of the millennium and may, in part, be linked to the negativism spread by Wakefield and his supporters.

Since September 2016 17 children have died from measles in Romania,

menace

according to the Romanian health minister, Florian Bodog, due to poverty and growing scepticism towards vaccines. Since February last year, the measles outbreak has infected 3,400 persons in Romania alone and, in mid-March this year, an entire hospital in Bulgaria was quarantined after 12 employees at the hospital contracted measles. An outbreak in Belgium as well is believed to have originated in Romania.

Religious groups and public figures have led recent anti-vaccination campaigns in Romania. “Incorrect information, often tendentious, not based on scientific methods or real data should end so that they do not affect the health of our children,” says the president of the Romanian Society of Microbiology, Alexandru Rafila, according to the web-based magazine outbreaknewstoday.com, an outlet that tracks outbreaks of contagious diseases.

Measles is also on the rise in Germany with 203 cases in the first two months of 2017 compared with 326 entirely in the whole of 2016.

Parts of the anti-vaxxers movement are inspired by the second generation of the “Freemen” also known as the Sovereign Citizens Movement in the US, mixing conspiracy

thinking about “Big Pharma” with anti-state ideology.

Founded by the American nazi William Potter Gale, who was also a central figure in the Christian Identity movement, the “Freemen” of today have transformed themselves from a pure nazi outfit into something that has also been embraced by parts of the so-called alternative scene.

An example of this is the prominent Norwegian anti-vaxxer Ingunn Røiseland who, in 2014, tried to renounce her Norwegian citizenship and declared her house a sovereign nation and stopped paying her housing debts.

To her evident surprise, she was evicted by police after a court order. Røiseland has also been linked to websites denying the Holocaust and associates herself with self-declared “Illuminati expert” Hans Gaarder, an eager champion of the idea that a world-wide conspiracy is releasing so-called “chemtrails”, meaning that vapour trails from planes really contain chemicals designed to cause hazardous effects on the climate or human organisms.

While the anti-vaxx movement in the Western world mostly consists of spiritual cranks, Holocaust deniers and hippies or fascists, other parts of the world see even more sinister

and violent occurrences of anti-vaxx movements such as in Pakistan, where the Taliban is murdering health workers who vaccinate children because it believes that vaccines are a plot to reduce the fertility of the Pashtun population.

Many of the anti-vaxxers look very colourful and often can easily be ridiculed but they actually do have some impact, boosted by celebrities like Charlie Sheen, Kirsty Alley, Selma Blair, Jenny McCarthy, Jim Carrey, and most prominent of them all, one Donald John Trump, lately the president of the USA.

It is a fact that the lack of vaccines kills infinitely more people globally than terrorism does. Measles is one of the leading causes of death among young children. In 2015, 134,200 people died from measles, 15 every hour.

Due to vaccination programmes, death by measles was reduced globally by 79% between 2000 and 2015. It is paramount that people actually trust the scientifically researched information provided by health authorities and vaccinate their children.

To be efficient and to gain so-called herd immunity, the distribution of vaccines needs to reach a large share of a population. Herd immunity means protection from

infectious disease that occurs when a large percentage of a population has become immune to an infection, thereby providing a measure of protection for individuals who are not immune. In a population in which a large number of individuals are immune, chains of infection are likely to be disrupted, which stops or slows the spread of disease

The greater the proportion of individuals in a community who are immune, the smaller the probability that those who are not immune will come into contact with an infectious individual.

When a movement exists, either in society as whole, or within smaller circles, that actually refuses vaccines, the effect of herd immunity wanes and the risk of major disease outbreaks increases.

In our counter-factual era, a thousand year-old tradition of science is losing ground to cranks and obscurantists. Movements denying facts are on the rise and no longer just consist of Hollywood Nazis claiming that the Nazi Holocaust never took place.

Today's fact deniers are well-dressed, outspoken, talk politely and often use a pseudo-scientific language to pose one of the greatest threats to public health that exists.

They should be taken very seriously.

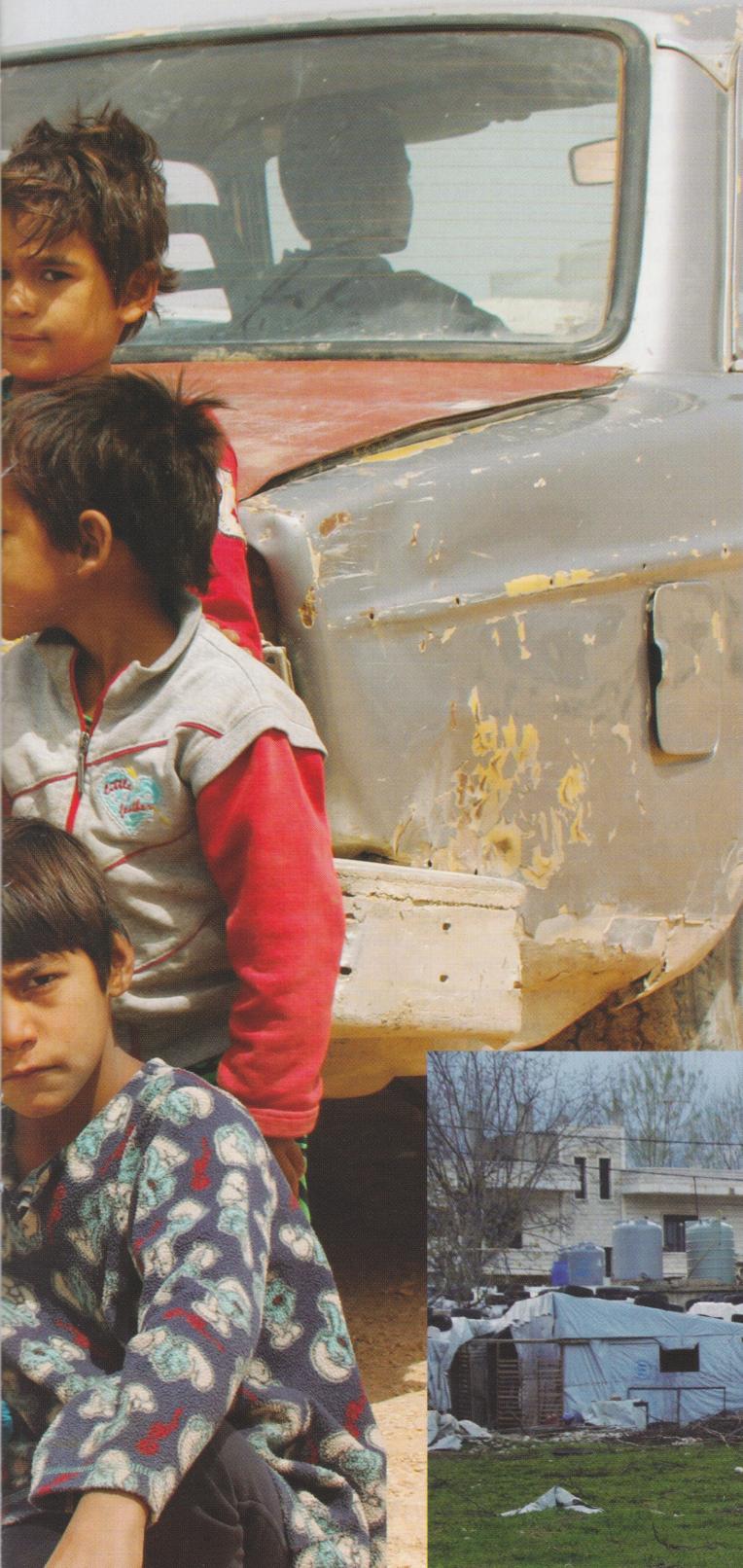
Lebanon is bu

From *Tor Bach* in Oslo and in the Bekaa Valley

A Syrian refugee settlement
near the Syrian border



bursting



The ongoing refugee crisis is threatening what is left of stability in the Middle East, not only in its political dimensions but also as a deepening environmental crisis.

In western and northern Europe, the 2015 influx of refugees has been reduced to a trickle thanks to intensified border controls and a treaty with Turkey that keeps her borders closed to those trying to escape the Syrian civil war.

Along Beirut's fashionable beach boulevard, there are few signs of what is going on in south Lebanon or in the Bekaa Valley. Tall luxury hotels and business buildings are being erected at high speed while the shamelessly rich and famous bask in their own splendour with cool drinks under palm trees or cruising around in their Lamborghinis or Ferraris.

To them, Beirut is again a playground, like Nice or Monaco, and the reality of the shadow people who shine shoes, sell chocolate, sell themselves is just a slight disturbance that can be overlooked.

Across the mountains to the east of Beirut lies the Bekaa Valley, a fertile depression with the Litani River running through and allowing irrigation to a variety of crops.

With snow-capped mountains surrounding it, the Bekaa Valley is a truly scenic vista. It is also temporary

home to half a million refugees from the Syrian war, Palestinians, Syrians and Lebanese who had fled from wars in Lebanon, and now had to flee again or, like the old Palestinian woman who had fled three times: first in 1948, then again in 1984 before ending up in a makeshift tent on a scraggy hill in the Bekaa.

I had been in refugee camps before and thought that I was prepared for what I would face in the Bekaa Valley.

People might imagine tents in orderly rows, with the UN or, maybe, the Red Cross flag fluttering proudly at the gate and children going to school and proper camp hospitals caring for the sick and wounded.

The reality is different. In Bekaa, one cannot talk about camps as such. There are settlements, put up by the refugees themselves in whatever open space that can be found or merely tarps covering the ruins of one of Lebanon's many previous wars. No flags waving, only loose pieces of tarpaulin flapping noisily in the wind while fumes from diesel ovens send out billows of bitter smoke.

We arrive in a settlement at Nahle, a small town near the Syrian border. Thirty-two kilometres north of us, in Arsak, the Lebanese army is surrounding 3,000 DAESH fighters...a spillover from the Syrian war.





The Hollyday Inn, once the finest hotel of the Middle East, today a reminder of how close it can be to violence and destruction.

Lebanon facts

- **Population:** 7,750,000 (January 2017 est.)
2,000,000 Syrian refugees, 450,000 Palestinian refugees
- **Area:** 4,036 sq mi
- **Chief of state:** President Michel AWW (since 31 October 2016)
- **Head of government:** Prime Minister Saad al-HARIRI (since 18 Dec 2016)
- **Deputy Prime Minister:** Ghassan HASBANI (since 18 Dec 2016)
- **Speaker of Parliament:** Nabih BERRI
- **Major religions:** Islam: 54 per cent. (Shia and Sunni 27% each.)
Christians: 40.5% Christian (21% Maronite, 8% Eastern Orthodox, 5% Melkite Catholic, 1% Protestant, 6% other Christian denominations non-native to Lebanon, Druze: 5,6%

BEKAA VALLEY

Situated between Mount Lebanon to the west and the Anti-Lebanon Mountains bordering to Syria to the east. 120 kilometres long and on average 16 kilometres wide.

Two main rivers: the Arantes and the Litani.

Home to at least 500,000 Syrian refugees. Zahle is the administrative city of the Bekaa Governorate, while Baalbek is the head city of the Hezbollah Party in the Bekaa Valley. The northern city of Arsal is held by 3,000 DAESH fighters surrounded by the Lebanese army.

Today they are probably the biggest intact fighting force of the tattered and battered Caliphate. Nahle, however, is quiet. At the settlement, placed on a stony hillock, the landowner is threatening the refugees, demanding a large sum of dollars to let them stay on this infertile and inhospitable spot of land.

Already forced into slavery and having to toil in his fields, the landlord now wants his slaves to pay him as well. There is nothing we can do about it.

The UN has a protection unit, but, in an area where the landowners have enormous clout, the UN is rather powerless.

European volunteers from the Lebanese relief organisation Salam hand out rations: beans, rice, bulgur, tea, lentils, and sugar – a sack of staple food for each family.

Some toys are handed out to the children who have none from before and they huddle around these precious gifts, eyes shining. A little girl dances in joy over some colouring pencils and a cheap Teddy bear.

An old man carefully boils water in a rusty can over an open fire, cigarette hanging

from the angle of his mouth. He is going to wash his hair. Water is a very sparse resource around here and it can go up to five days before the water tanks provided by the different aid agencies are filled.

I marvel at the enormous task it must be for the women here to keep the clothes clean in all the dust and the misery.

Back in Norway, I hear that the landlord has now evicted the entire settlement. Not only that, his armed men have chased the refugees off three new places before they finally find a spot where the landlord provides some protection. Then one night, all their tent-building materials suddenly burn.

Being a child in this environment is desperate. Small children are used as slave labour in agriculture. Others are sent out to beg or to sell counterfeit chocolate on the streets.

Diseases, rats gnawing at the children while their sleeping, biting cold in wintertime all contribute to appalling living conditions. Sometimes a defunct or faulty diesel stove sets an entire settlement ablaze, leaving people who have

The Bekaa Valley is fertile, but the heavy pollution of the Litani River makes crops in certain areas inedible, and drinking water is a limited resource.



left everything behind with absolutely nothing.

To some boys or girls destiny is even harsher, taking them to whorehouses in Beirut.

I join the school bus of Salam to two different locations. The bus does not take children to school but rather school to children. One day, we spend in the mountains, very close to the Syrian border.

From the other side of the hill we can hear remote shelling. The children that attend Salam's English classes live in an orphanage run by a Christian organisation. Maybe, the English lessons will empower them to leave, maybe it will enable them to study and create a future for themselves.

On the second day with the bus, one of Salam's nurses educates mothers from the settlement on health issues. We, meanwhile, are left with the children outside the bus. We hand out games, toys and plush animals to keep them entertained while their mothers educate themselves.

A little girl sits completely still with a blue plush bunny, just holding it tight for two hours. Time to leave, and all

the toys are collected. A happy childhood is a scarce resource, and right now, there are no toys to give away. I dutifully collect the blue bunny and break the little girl's heart. She cries and then goes to pick up the stone she keeps as a substitute for a doll!

The refugee crisis does not only offer its victims a harsh environment. It also contributes to a worsening environmental crisis.

The Litani River is heavily polluted, so polluted that in some periods there are bans on selling crops from certain areas.

The influx of half a million of refugees in the Bekaa puts an excruciating strain on already scarce drinking water supplies and forces deeper and deeper wells probing for groundwater.

Firewood is also scarce, and the refugees use unsafe diesel ovens for heating and cooking, contributing to the general air pollution.

Very little is being done to solve the problem in a country where at least 2.5 million of a population of 7,750,000 are refugees, those from the Syrian war alone counting at least two millions.

In May 2015, the UNHCR was ordered by the Lebanese government to stop registering new refugees, though new refugees keep arriving and nobody can exactly tell how many refugees the country hosts.

Syrians have to compete with poor Lebanese for the poorest paid jobs, something that creates tensions in a country already deeply divided between political and religious factions.

Back in Beirut, I pay 4 US dollars entry fee at a café at the Beach Boulevard that then charges me a further 7 US dollars for a glass of orange juice.

A Lebanese woman complains loudly to some foreign friends: "The Syrians take away our jobs". The diamonds that adorn her ears, neck and fingers are at least worth £10,000 and she bears no trace of ever having had to do work of any kind, though her visible lack of work experience is probably not caused by destitute Syrian builders.

Lebanon is never stable, and now new tensions are making the pot simmer again. The economy is dire, pollution is increasing and

the numbers of refugees are an enormous burden on a country that is slightly smaller than Northern Ireland.

Meanwhile, the rich and famous get on with enjoying their hedonistic lives while, very close to the beach boulevard, the shelled out Holiday Inn stands as a grim reminder of the 1975 – 1990 civil war, a landmark that seems as invisible as the Syrian shoeshine boys who seek their fortune in the streets of Beirut.

The world seems oblivious to the fact that Lebanon is bursting with refugees. Jordan is bursting with refugees. Turkey is bursting with refugees and on its way into a new dictatorship. Syria is bursting with internal refugees and in the middle of a bloody civil war.

When the dams really burst, there will be a disaster and nobody seems remotely to have a solution for how to deal with a real flood of refugees reaching the shores of western and northern Europe.

Like the feckless and idle rich and famous in Lebanon, the governments of the West have eyes wide shut to what disasters the future might bring.

Some Lessons from

Cas Mudde spells them out...



IT IS SAFE to say, even with still some months left, that 2017 has not brought the European populist radical right what they and most of the international media had expected.

Sure, a President Marine Le Pen or Prime Minister Geert Wilders were never realistic options but they and their parties stayed well below the (what now seems peak) polls of last year and even underperformed in light of more recent polls.

In fact, Marine Le Pen scored lower in the second round of the presidential elections than she had been polling for the first round in 2016!

Unfortunately, this has led to another misperception: we went from an almighty “populism” to a defeated one.

But the populist radical right is not defeated at all. In fact, Wilders’ Party for Freedom (PVV) did better than in the 2012 election, though a bit less well than in the 2010 elections.

However, this was compensated by the success of the newest star in the Dutch radical right firmament, the Forum for Democracy (FvD), which entered parliament with two (out of 150) seats and is currently polling around seven seats while its membership is growing explosively.

Le Pen lost the second round of the presidential elections with 33.9 percent, almost twice as much as her father gained in the second round in 2002.

Even the Front National’s disappointing result in the

parliamentary elections (13.2%) was the third-best in party history and its eight seats the second-best. And populist radical right parties managed to get good results in parliamentary elections in Austria and Germany.

It is true that in certain countries mainstream (right-wing) parties have adopted the language and even some policies of the populist radical right. This is most visible in Austria, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom – not to speak of the situation in East Central Europe, where Islamophobia and nationalism have become hegemonic.

At the same time, the two most powerful politicians within the European Union, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel

2017...



Marine Le Pen and Geert Wilders
Photo: Euractiv.com

media got enamoured by the “Austrian Macron,” conservative Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz.

But this is nothing compared to the internal struggles that the National Front (FN) is facing. After having been “the second most powerful woman in Europe” for several years, the unchallenged leader of both the FN and the European radical right, Marine Le Pen is now facing open criticism of her electoral strategy and performance.

Her niece, Marion Maréchal-Le Pen, has decided to take a step back, sitting out the inevitable internal cleansing, while her main advisor, the controversial Florian Philippot, has threatened to leave the FN if it softens its anti-EU position.

Embattled from all sides, including as always her extremist father, Marine Le Pen is openly thinking of changing the party name in a vain attempt to get rid of its extremist stigma (which, however, is as much attached to her family name as to her party’s name).

It is impossible to predict what exactly the direct future holds for these, and other, European populist radical right parties. Most likely, established parties like the FN and FPÖ will rebound while newer parties like the German Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) and FvD will come and go. But it is important to learn some lessons from the recent events.

First and foremost, the self-defeating truism that populist radical right parties are not beholden to the rules of politics that define “democratic” parties is patently false. When populist radical right parties don’t meet their own expectations or those of the media, they immediately hit problems.

This can even happen when parties actually gain votes, as was the case of the FN in the second round of the presidential elections or of the Flemish Interest (VB) in the 2006 Antwerp elections.

Macron, have resisted this trend and campaigned on a reasonably open and tolerant agenda.

But mainstream (right-wing) parties are not the only ones affected by recent elections. Several populist radical right parties are coping with the changed behaviour of their political rivals.

Wilders has been politically weakened since Premier Rutte stopped “the wrong kind of populism” and the emergence of radical right competitor FvD has made him almost invisible in the media.

In Austria, Heinz-Christian Strache and his Austrian Freedom Party face a similar problem, having fallen from first to third in the polls, after both the centre-left SPÖ and centre-right ÖVP shifted significantly rightwards and the

Second, and related, most populist radical right parties are not *Führerparteien* (leader parties), in which the leader is all-powerful and rules unopposed. This is the case in some new parties, and the unique PVV (which has only one official member, Wilders himself), but most successful parties have powerful leaders who are nevertheless beholden to other influential factions and people within the party – some of which have a personal, financial stake in the party’s success).

Third, the media is not always the friend of the populist radical right. Media jump on what they consider “newsworthy” stories, which tends to favour the new and outlandish rather than the old and mainstream.

But some of the populist radical right parties have themselves become old and mainstream from the perspective of the media.

The FPÖ has been around since the mid-1950s and has been populist radical right since 1986. Most of the French electorate has lived their whole life with the FN and a Le Pen. Hence, “new” politicians like Kurz and Macron are more attractive and become media stars, putting *all* their competitors, including the populist radical right, in their shadows.

Fourthly, and finally, the populist radical right can be defeated without buying into their language, style and politics. While it is true that large parts of the European population hold authoritarian, nativist and populist attitudes – how could they not given the daily diet much of the media feed them – most have (grudgingly) accepted the reality of multi-ethnic society and prefer the liberal democratic system.

What they are looking for is an inspiring politician who dares to stand for these values and doesn’t waver at every so-called crisis.

Far right enters Germany

Michael Klein reports from Berlin

FOR THE FIRST time since the early days of the Federal Republic of Germany, a far right party – the Alternative for Germany (AfD) – will send candidates into the national parliament, the Bundestag.

The AfD has become third largest party with 12.6% of the votes leaving the Green Party, the Liberals and the Left behind.

The results showed heavy losses for the two main parties, the Christian Democrats and Social Democrats which, together, lost some 14% of their previous vote, reaching their worst results ever in a post-war German election.

Compared with the roughly two million voters the AfD mobilised in 2013, this time nearly 5.9 million voted for the racist party.

In Saxony, where the now-resigned – and recently charged with perjury – party speaker, Frauke Petry, led the regional branch, the party increased its vote by 400% compared with the most recent regional elections in 2014.

Alarmingly, the Social Democrats gained only 10% of the vote. In all the other East German states, the AfD emerged as second strongest party.

Further strongholds of the party were in Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg but pockets of as much as 40%

support for the AfD can be identified in many regions.

The AfD was able bring some 1.1 million people who had abstained from the 2013 election to the polls. An additional million votes came from supporters of the Christian Democrats as well as 0.5 million from the Social Democrats and another 0.4 million from the Left party.

The AfD was, above average, supported by male voters, by voters with secondary education and with ages ranging from 30 to 44 years.

For those who voted AfD, frustration or rejection of Merkel's decisions to not close the borders in 2015 was the most important reason, closely followed by the notion that the Christian Democratic party (CDU) under Merkel's stewardship has renounced its conservative profile.

Even more than a third of those who did not vote AfD agreed that the party's position of reducing the assumed influence of Islam and restricting immigration are necessary.

In parts of East Germany, where racists mobilised by AfD and Pegida tried to crush Merkel's campaign appearances, there is a strong feeling of marginalisation and neglect resulting from the fact that, after more than



25 years since unifying the two German states and despite many promises by the political elite, equal treatment is elusive.

While, in many constituencies, the Left Party was the protagonist many trusted to address these issues, the party is seen by many as part of the political establishment,

meanwhile. This explains, in part, losses it suffered.

A major factor in voters' anger and frustration is the continuous depopulation of the more rural areas that lead to the closure of schools and doctors' surgeries and significantly affect the quality of life.

While most parties did not show up during

nan parliament



Alice Weidel and
Alexander Gauland
Photo: Olaf Kosinsky

the campaign, AfD systematically toured very small towns and places.

Finally, it was easy for the AfD to reach out to people with racist attitudes with a campaign linking the growing number of refugees coming to Germany with issues like crime, insecurity, and unfair treatment.

On the evening of the

election, leading AfD candidate Alexander Gauland threatened to "hunt" the future government again and again.

This aggressive statement got huge applause from the AfD crowd and should be understood as an indication of inflated self-confidence. This is no

surprise as the election strategy of the AfD – to create public awareness and address the electorate with explicitly racist and revisionist statements – has paid off very well.

After its success, representatives of the AfD will gain seats in bodies controlling public broadcasting, civic

education and the secret service as well as the parliamentary assemblies of international organisations like the Council of Europe and NATO in which the Front National and the Party for Freedom are already present.

In Germany's parliament, the strongest minority party traditionally gets the influential position of presidency of the budgets committee. It might also get the same position in the culture committee in which many projects on confronting racism and antisemitism are discussed and agreed.

In regional parliaments, the AfD has several times attacked civil society and charity groups that are supporting refugees and demanded cancellation of their funding.

In all, the AfD will continue to put pressure on the democratic parties, especially on issues relevant to its followers like migration, crime, abortion and family, blaming the left and liberalism for what they call the decay of Germany.

Its breakthrough has provided the AfD with 94 seats in the Bundestag plus hundreds of jobs for far right and racist activists. Its work there will be dominated by a stance of belligerent polarising and hate speech.

NAZI RUDOLF HESS RALLY FLOPS

From Michael Klein in Berlin

HARDLINE NAZIS gathered in Berlin in August to commemorate their idol Rudolf Hess but, in their first attempt to do so after several years of inactivity, faced resolute opposition from anti-fascists.

When Hitler's deputy Hess committed suicide on 17 August 1987, German nazis quickly staged a rally in front of Berlin's Spandau Prison where he had been held for several decades. The prison was later demolished to prevent it from becoming a nazi shrine and Hess' remains were buried in a family plot in Wunsiedel, Bavaria.

Wunsiedel, soon after, became the site of regular nazi demonstrations heralding him as a hero and a martyr killed by the British. His long-time lawyer and his son were among those contributing to these legends. The nazis mobilised 1,100 to their rally there in 1990 but met militant anti-fascist resistance. As a result, all rallies were banned in the town the next year leading to a situation in which Bayreuth, Rudolstadt and Fulda were chosen for later marches.

As of 1994, no Hess marches were allowed and much smaller rallies were held in Luxemburg, Denmark and the Czech Republic. In 2001, top nazi lawyer, the late Jürgen Rieger, won a case to have the demonstration returned to Wunsiedel, the annual rally then peaking in 2004 when 5,500 nazis from across Europe paraded through the streets.

A long-term anti-fascist campaign that successfully brought together local protests with a nationwide mobilisation and a decision by the Federal Constitutional Court stopped the nazis using Wunsiedel, however. The years following saw several attempts to march but numbers declined steadily. Also, with the consent of Hess's family, his remains were exhumed and cremated and the gravestone destroyed.

The recent rally in Berlin was the first attempt in years to revive the Hess march tradition. Organisers established a webpage with information in more than ten languages but were not allowed to refer openly to Hess by word or with images during the event itself. About 800 nazis showed up, finding themselves confronted by twice the number of anti-fascists who blocked the streets and humiliated them. ●

Themar: biggest fascist concert since 1945

Jan Raabe reports from Weimar

ABOUT 6,000 nazis invaded the small Thuringian town of Themar on 15 July for their so-called "Rock against Foreign Infiltration II" concert, creating probably the largest fascist "cultural" spectacle in Germany since 1945.

The sheer scale of the gig was not surprising, the concert having been months in the preparation. Indeed, the first promotional video, in February, presented it as successor to the infamous "Rocktoberfest" in Switzerland on 15 October 2016 that was attended by as many as 5,000 nazis. An "underground" event, a large part of the organisation for that concert was controlled from Germany. The headline band in Switzerland – and also in Themar – was *Stahlgewitter*, an early member of the hate rock scene, founded in 1995.

Also in the line up were not only notorious groups like *The Lunikoff Conspiracy*, *Sleipnir* and *Uwocaust* but also well-known younger bands like *TreueOrden*, *Blutzeugen* and *Flak*. Interestingly, only German bands made appearances.

At the concert, it was announced that, as it was a "political rally", in addition to the mentioned bands there would also be twelve speakers covering the entire spectrum of militant fascism in Germany.

They ranged from large numbers of the violent street fighters of the Freie Kameradschaften through to organisations, like Europäische Aktion, that deny the Holocaust and the National Democratic Party (NPD) to smaller nazi parties like III. Weg or Die Rechte.

The choice of the speakers was itself a signal to the scene of who actually belongs to it and who does not. Identitarians were significantly not in sight. Notably, Denis Nikitin of the Russian fascist clothes brand White Rex was additionally on the list as a "Special Guest".

The authorities had previously tried to put a question mark over the concert's political character, pointing to the €35 per person entrance fee as a

counter-argument.

The courts, however, noted clearly the political nature of the concert which, even if more than €200,000 were taken in entry fees, together with drinks and the sale of merchandise would coin over €500,000.

With so much at stake, the nazis worked tirelessly for several months selling tickets in advance. Just days before the event, Tommy Frenck, who runs the *Goldener Löwe* restaurant in nearby Hildburghausen – where regular nazi concerts take place – posted pictures of the construction of the huge event tent.

On the day itself, over 1,000 police were waiting to check the papers of the nazis arriving in cars and fleets of buses. The concert started at 12.00 noon but it quickly became evident that neither the location nor the tent was big enough for the 6,000 participants so the site was expanded from the land rented from the (then) Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) member and the mayor of Grimmelshausen, Bodo Dressel, onto neighbouring land belonging to other people. (Dressel, incidentally, quit the AfD when it became publicly known that he had rented his property to the nazis.)

It was noticeable that the arriving nazis, some of whom came from the Czech Republic and the Netherlands, were mostly aged age of 25-50 years and that very young participants were seldom seen and nor were many female participants.

What was played at the concert and what the speakers had to say remains a mystery. The venue was sealed and the participants were ordered not to bring cameras, even mobile phones with cameras being prohibited.

Shortly after the event, however, a short video appeared on the Internet that only shows the exterior with police standing around and, then dozens, if not hundreds, of participants in the tent, raising their arms in the Hitler salute and bawling "Heil".

Confronted with these images, the

police stated that they had to respect proportionality of response and that the concert was – in any case – almost over by then.

The numbers attending attracted much German press and political attention. The prime minister of Thuringia, Bodo Ramelow, called for a tightening of the right of assembly but the Left Party politician's demand was rejected by anti-fascists in favour of demands that the police do their job properly.

The size of the Themar concert was entirely predictable. In recent years, a large-scale nazi event culture has emerged in Thuringia. In 2016, the first "Rock Against Foreign Infiltration" took place there with about 600 participants followed by a "Rock for Identity" concert with 3,500 participants.

Thuringia, in the centre of Germany is very conveniently located for transport access and, above all, there are places where there is a distinct lack of civil society. Further, there are numerous nazi groups with experienced cadres able to organise such big events, safe in the knowledge that the authorities in the region's many small towns are hardly able to impose control.

As a result, four major concerts, which were also announced as political rallies, have already been held this year in Thuringia. In May, the NPD's *Eichsfeldtag*, attended by 500 took place. Next came "Rock for Germany" with 820 participants in early July and the "Rock against Foreign Infiltration" two weeks later. July also saw "Rock for Identity" with more than 1,000 present.

While the overall number of nazi concerts is constantly decreasing – according to official reports – these "rallies" have long since evolved into a format that gives the nazis opportunities to meet, to experience moments of collective strength and comradeship, to build up contacts and, most importantly to make mountains of cash in to pump into the scene.

None of this bodes well.

Right-wing conservatives far right win big in Austria's snap national election

From **Martin Jordan** in Vienna

AFTER A DRASTIC lurch to the right, Austria is getting ready for the worst, yet most likely, consequence: another coalition government between the right-wing conservative People's Party (ÖVP) and the far right Freedom Party (FPÖ).

The revamped ÖVP has won the Austrian national election with 31.5% (+7.5%), ahead of the centre-left Social Democratic Party (SPÖ) with 26.9% (±0%), and the FPÖ with 26% (+5.5%).

Sebastian Kurz, 31-year-old political shooting star and much-hyped new leader of the ÖVP has done what nobody would have thought possible when he took over the dying party in May 2017.

Since his take-over and provocation of snap elections he led the polls and eventually achieved a start-to-finish victory through minute preparation and consistent implementation of a plan sketched out on the political drawing board by him and his personal aides.

He has not only reinvented the former political powerhouse that was the ÖVP but also managed to make people believe in his "new way" and to carry through an exceptionally successful election campaign and to become the youngest leader

of any country in Europe.

Already early on, as chairman of the ÖVP's youth wing, Kurz drew attention and mockery for his populist and unconventional campaigning style that paid off when the former law student dropped out of university to become Minister of Foreign Affairs and Integration at the age of only 27 years.

Kurz, often described by the media and party affiliates as "Messiah", has remoulded his party's internal power structures to concentrate decision-making power at the top (meaning himself), changed the party's name into "List Sebastian Kurz – the new People's Party" and switched the party's colour from black to turquoise as well as setting out a new right-wing populist course.

In an attempt to undercut the FPÖ, Kurz has successfully managed to drag the ÖVP even further to the right. He is very verbose about the "dangers of Islam and immigration for society" and, thereby, not only effectively took over the one single issue of the FPÖ campaign but did so from a position of power and with greater credibility.

Different from the FPÖ's leader Heinz-Christian Strache, Kurz's words are followed by direct

or indirect action that is effectively promoted even by international media.

For example, Kurz, in his role as foreign minister, made international headlines by demanding a "closing off of the Balkan route" at the height of the 2015-2016 refugee crisis that eventually was also put into effect and led to a shift of the main refugee route to the Mediterranean Sea.

With this change in the ongoing refugee crisis, Kurz moved on with his argumentation and demanded, earlier this year, to "end the NGO madness in the Mediterranean Sea" and, since then, shifted the boundaries of what can be said and demanded.

As integration minister, Kurz has already been trying for some time to close the publicly-funded Islamic kindergartens in Vienna and not even a scandal around an allegedly manipulated study that he commissioned in this context has harmed his popularity or credibility in the public's eyes.

His main opponent on the left, Christian Kern, current Chancellor of Austria and leader of the SPÖ, campaigned hard until the very end and managed to achieve a much better

result than expected, despite plummeting poll numbers and a dirty-campaigning-scandal that badly affected his party.

Also, while Kern was still energetically fighting the election campaign, many SPÖ members seemingly had already had thrown in the towel and names of possible successors to him were being bandied about even before Election Day. What helped him mobilise the necessary votes to stay relevant was the distinctly threatening prospect of yet another ÖVP-FPÖ coalition.

There is no question that the SPÖ needs a complete respray to stay relevant in future elections but it is doubtful whether Kern will be the one leading this effort.

A year ago, the FPÖ was seen as serious contender for first place in national elections. However, Kurz's unexpected surge and his successful hijacking of the traditional right-wing issues left the FPÖ's campaign appear somewhat pathetic.

FPÖ leader Strache simply appeared weak when repeatedly agreeing with the positions of Kurz while defensively noting that he had demanded the same things a long time ago.

Nonetheless, the FPÖ had

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the easiest task this time. Not only was the election dominated by one single big issue – migration, the main one since 2015 ongoing refugee crisis – but the fierce fighting between the two coalition partners ÖVP and SPÖ, catapulted the FPÖ to a success that drew it level with its best ever result in the 1999 national election under the leadership of the notorious Jörg Haider.

Then, the FPÖ became the coalition partner of the ÖVP in a move that resulted in an international outcry and EU sanctions against Austria. And still to this day, Austria is dealing with the financial fallout produced by the scandal riddled government of 2000–2006, not to mention the numerous prosecutions of fraudulent and corrupt politician, or the convictions of FPÖ politicians for their involvement in National Socialist activities.

Such an unholy alliance again looms on the horizon since a remake of the ÖVP-SPÖ pact would most likely be political suicide for both parties and there are no other formations possible to produce a parliamentary majority. ●

Sebastian Kurz, 31-year-old political shooting star and much-hyped new leader of the ÖVP. Photo Dragan Tatic





Going undercover

Safya Khan-Ruf talks to Patrik Hermansson about his year inside the Alt-Right

Many students volunteer or take up part time jobs during their studies and Patrik was no different. But he volunteered with HOPE not hate to infiltrate the far right, running a parallel life as Erik both online and in person.

In a small house on the outskirts of Seattle, Nazi flags are draped across the walls. There's a Mein Kampf on the shelf, a bust of Hitler in the corner and tiny porcelain figures with Nazi armbands on the table.

Around 25 men, mostly in their early twenties, sit inside the house sharing a barbecue. All are armed as they discuss weapons and what they would do to Jews, black people and anti-fascists. Every few minutes, they joke about throwing them into the oven.

"These were drunk testosterone-filled men, with guns and a genocidal ideology. I was an anti-fascist, in the middle of a suburb with no taxis and a dead phone. At that point, I was actually scared," says Patrik Hermansson, 25, an openly gay Swedish man working for HOPE not hate, who spent a year undercover within the world of the Alternative Right.

JUGGLING DUAL LIVES

"It's very stressful and frustrating not to be able to tell my friends or my parents, to keep everything separate," says Patrik.

While he was Erik, attending alt-right conferences and social events, he needed to instinctively answer to the right name and constantly be active on social media.

"It would be weird if I wasn't active online for even a few days, I scrolled up and down Erik's Facebook page four times a day to be seen as active."

Patrik slowly worked his way through the alt-right, attending weekend conferences, informal meetings and talks.

He didn't usually go chanting on marches and demos but was present at Charlottesville where a white supremacist drove his vehicle into a crowd of protesters, killing one and injuring many others.

"I was in the middle of their rally, guarded by rows of police and barricaded off. The police were armed, shielded and masked. they were ready for violence. The people I was with were also armed. Then, I was like, this doesn't feel great."

Patrik explains that most of the violence happened outside the barricaded area but that he'd never been more stressed in his life.

"This was the week before my dissertation deadline for my Masters and I had practically nothing written. I just couldn't be arrested; I didn't have the time to be arrested. Next week ok... but not that week!"

But Patrik says most of the time, he did not fear a physical attack, it was just the stress of being found out.

"It was strongest at the start, I was paranoid. But then that decreased which was dangerous because I relaxed and my real name even slipped out once or twice. Towards the end, I was afraid because I was in so deep and I just needed to get in a little deeper. I was afraid to mess up and ruin the project."

INSIDE THE ALT-RIGHT

While those he approached (initially in London, via the London Forum) were guarded, Patrik says he had gained the trust of key activists as the months passed and he remained in their network, attending events and appearing to sympathise with their views.

His "Erik" persona was that of a Swede disillusioned with the left-wing bias and the collapse of Swedish society. (The idea of Sweden being a failed left-wing state and the "rape capital of Europe" is a common fallacy among alt-right and alt-light conspiracy theorists.)

"So I just complained a lot and said I liked Brexit. I played being sympathetic rather than convinced by far right narratives. I think they like it when you come as a blank slate, not already filled with ideology."

Meeting apparently polite and hospitable people was perhaps one of the most surprising elements of his journey as Patrik attended various social events, such as barbecues, picnics, gallery openings and pubs.

"What's dangerous is that people start tying their whole lives with the movement, they read the same alternative media, the same books and they get secluded from the rest of society. Even if they don't agree with all of the ideology – and many of them don't – even if they start disagreeing with everything, all their friends are inside."

BACK INTO THE REAL WORLD

After a year inside the alt-right, the mission ended when HOPE not hate announced its major exposé in the *New York Times* and

Patrik could finally tell his parents and friends.

"When I told my parents, they were like, 'Oh, cool, that sounds interesting,'" he says. "My friend were like, 'ah, I get it now, that is why you were so boring.'"

Only Patrik's boyfriend had been aware from the start.

"He knew I had done activism stuff before, he was fine with it. It just took a bit of time. When you tell people they don't really get it at first."

He says being around alt-right supporters, prejudice quickly became normalised and things that had shocked before – vile words spewed against minorities, extreme antisemitism, threats of violence – began to seem (in the context of his undercover associations) 'normal'.

"It does have an impact. Sometimes at the start, you want to scream, you want to leave, but you can't. You have to sit down and smile and there's this feeling of claustrophobia."

When asked why he agreed to go undercover, Patrik says it was partly activism and partly wanting to understand how the far right functioned in this new guise, how it recruited and put its ideology into practice.

Now that he has seen it up close and first-hand, he is glad to be out and able to express his views freely.

Reflecting on this intense past year of his life, Patrik says: "What's obvious after a year inside the alt-right is that we cannot become complacent. These are not just opinions. These are organisations that actively foment hate and promote violence towards large groups of people. They are dangerous and their dangerous ideology must be confronted, wherever it appears."

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